

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

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"THE SMART SET" FOR APRIL

The next number of this magazine will contain a very unusual novel. It is a study of a woman—a woman whose like you have never known, who nevertheless in a hundred ways is like a hundred women you know. It is a story that will prove absorbing to everyone who has the slightest interest in the peculiarities, and weaknesses, and inconsistencies, and possibilities of the feminine nature.

"THE RED-HEADED WOMAN," By Grace MacGowan Cooke

Among the dozen short stories in this issue is one that will stand out not only because of its theme but also because it is by a new author. It is a serious story, intensely dramatic, told with such finished art that it fairly represents the best qualities of American literature of the day. It will be worth your while to read

"A REALIST," By Julia Lawrence Shafter

There will be other short stories by Mrs. Henry Dudeney, William R. Lighton, Guy Bolton, Inez Haynes Gillmore, Arthur Stringer, and four clever authors hitherto unknown to our readers: Arthur Stanley Wheeler, H. G. Dwight, Edward Childs Carpenter and Mary Moore.

SOME GOOD POETRY and an ENTERTAINING ESSAY

Bliss Carman, one of the leaders among our younger poets, contributes a charming essay "On Having Known a Painter." The verse in this number will be by Arthur Davison Ficke, Clarence Urmy, Madison Cawein, Zona Gale, Edith M. Thomas and others. There will also be another series of Gouverneur Morris's inimitable "Below Stairs" verses.

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THE PRINCESS ELOPES

By Harold MacGrath

IT is rather difficult these days for a man who takes such scant interest in foreign affairs—trust a whilom diplomat for that!—to follow the continual geographical disturbances of European surfaces. Thus, I cannot distinctly recall the exact location of the grand duchy of Barscheit or of the neighboring principality of Dopplekinn. It meets my needs and purposes, however, to say that Berlin and Vienna were easily accessible, and that a three hours' journey would bring you under the shadow of the Carpathian range, where, in my diplomatic days, I used often to hunt the "bear that walks like a man." Barscheit was known among her sister states as "the meddler," the "maker of trouble," and the duke as "Old Grumpy"—*Brummer*. To use a familiar Yankee expression, Barscheit had a finger in every pie. Whenever there was a political broth being made, whether in Italy, Prussia, Germany or Austria, Barscheit would snatch up a ladle and start in. She took care of her own affairs so easily that she had plenty of time to concern herself with the affairs of her neighbors. This is not to advance that Barscheit was wholly modern; far from it. The faults of Barscheit may be traced back to a certain historical pillar of salt, easily recalled by all those who attended Sunday school. "Rubbering" is a vulgar word, and I disdain to use it.

When a woman looks around it is invariably a portent of trouble; the man forgets his important engagement, and runs amuck, knocking over people, principles and principalities. If Aspasia had not observed Pericles that memorable day; if there had not been

an oblique slant to Calypso's eyes as Ulysses passed her way; if the eager Delilah had not offered favorable comment on Samson's ringlets; in fact, if all the women in history and romance had gone about their affairs as they should have done what uninteresting reading history would be today!

Now, this is a story of a woman who looked around, and of a man who did not keep his appointment on time; out of a grain of sand, a mountain. Of course there might have been other causes, but with these I'm not familiar.

This duchy of Barscheit is worth looking into. Imagine a country with telegraph and telephone and medieval customs, a country with electric lights, railways, surface cars, hotel elevators and ancient laws! Something of the customs of the duchy must be told in the passing, though, for my part, I am vigorously against explanatory passages in stories of action. Barscheit bristled with militarism; the little man always imitates the big one, but always lacks the big man's excuses. Militarism entered into and overshadowed the civic laws. There were three things you might do without offense; you might bathe, eat and sleep, only you must not sleep out loud. One was hemmed in by a set of laws which had their birth in the dark dungeons of the Inquisition. They congealed the blood of a man born and bred in a commercial country. If you broke a law, you were relentlessly punished; there was no mercy. In America we make laws and then hide them in dull-looking volumes which the public have neither the time nor the inclination to read. In this duchy of mine it was different; you

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ran into a law on every corner, in every park, in every public building; little oblong signs, enameled, which told you that you could *not* do something or other—"Forbidden!" The beauty of German laws is that when you learn all the things that you cannot do, you begin to find out that the things you can do are not worth a hang in the doing.

As soon as a person learned to read he or she began life by reading these laws. If you could not read, so much the worse for you; you had to pay a guide who charged you almost as much as the full cost of the fine.

The opposition political party in the United States is always howling militarism. They haven't the slightest idea what it really is. One side, please, in Barscheit, when an officer came along, or take the consequences. If you carelessly bumped into him, you were knocked down. If you objected, you were arrested. If you struck back, ten to one you received a beating with the flat of the saber. And never, never mistake the soldiery for the police; that is to say, never ask an officer to direct you to any place. This is regarded in the light of an insult. The cub-lieutenants did more to keep a passable sidewalk—for the passage of said cub-lieutenants—than all the magistrates put together. How they used to swagger up and down the Königstrasse, around the Platz, in and out of the restaurants! I remember doing some side-stepping myself, and I was a diplomat, supposed to be immune from the rank discourtesies of the military. But that was early in my career.

In a year not so remote as not to be readily recalled, the United States packed me off to Barscheit because I had an uncle who was a senator. I was given some papers, the permission to hang out a shingle reading "American Consul," and the promise of my board and keep. My amusements were to be paid out of my own pocket. Straightway I purchased three horses, found a capable Japanese valet, and selected a cozy house near the barracks, which

stood west of the Volksgarten, on the pretty lake. A beautiful road ran around this body of water, and it wasn't long ere the officers began to pass comments on the riding of "that wild American." As I detest what is known as park-riding, you may very well believe that I circled the lake at a clip which must have opened the eyes of the easy-going officers. I grew quite chummy with a few of them; and I may speak of occasions when I did not step off the sidewalk as they came along. A man does more toward gaining the affections of foreigners by giving a good dinner now and then than by exploiting the most complete knowledge of international laws. I gained considerable fame by my little dinners at Muller's rathskeller, under the Continental Hotel.

Six months passed, during which I rode, read, drove and dined, the actual labors of the consulate being cared for by a German clerk who knew more about the business than I did.

By this you will observe that diplomacy has degenerated into the gentle art of exciting jaded palates and of scribbling one's name across passports; I know of no better definition. I forget what the largess of my office was.

Presently there were terrible doings. The old reigning grand duke desired peace of mind, and, moving determinedly toward this end, he declared in public that his niece, the young and tender Princess Hildegard, should wed the Prince of Dopplekinn, whose vineyards gave him a fine income. This was finality; the avuncular guardian had waited long enough for his wilful ward to make up her mind as to the selection of a suitable husband; now *he* determined to take a hand in the matter. And you shall see how well he managed it.

It is scarcely necessary for me to state that her highness had her own ideas of what a husband should be like, gathered, no doubt, from execrable translations from "Ouida" and the gentle Miss Braddon. A girl of twenty usually has a formidable re-

gard for romance, and the princess was fully up to the manner of her kind. If she could not marry romantically, she refused to marry at all.

I can readily appreciate her uncle's perturbation. I do not know how many princelings she thrust into utter darkness. She would *never* marry a man who wore glasses; this was too tall, that one too short; and when one happened along who was without visible earmarks or signs of being shopworn her refusal was based upon just—"Because!"—a weapon as invincible as the fabled spear of Parsifal. She had spurned the addresses of Prince Mischler, laughed at those of the Count of — - — (the short dash indicates the presence of a hyphen) and General Muerrisch, of the emperor's bodyguard, who was, I'm sure, good enough—in his own opinion—for any woman. Every train brought to the capital some suitor with a consonated, hyphenated name and a pedigree as long as a bore's idea of a funny story. But the princess did not care for pedigrees that were squint-eyed or bow-legged. One and all of them she cast aside as unworthy of her consideration. Then, like the ancient worm, the duke turned. She should marry Dopplekinn, who, having no wife to do the honors in his castle, was wholly agreeable.

The Prince of Dopplekinn reigned over the neighboring principality. If you stood in the middle of it and were a baseball player, you could throw a stone across the frontier in any direction. But the vineyards were among the finest in Europe. The prince was a widower, and among his own people was affectionately styled "*der rot-nasig*," which, I believe, designates an illuminated proboscis. When he wasn't fishing for rainbow trout he was sleeping in his cellars. He was often missing at the monthly reviews, but nobody ever worried; they knew where to find him. And besides, he might just as well sleep in his cellars as in his carriage, for he never rode a horse if he could get out of doing so. He was really good-natured and easy-going, so long as no one crossed him severely;

and you could tell him a joke once and depend upon his understanding it immediately, which is more than I can say for the duke. Years and years ago the prince had had a son; but at the tender age of three the boy had run away from the castle confines, and no one ever heard of him again. The enemies of the prince whispered among themselves that the boy had run away to escape compulsory military service, but the boy's age precluded this accusation. The prince advertised, after the fashion of those times, sent out detectives and notified his various brothers; but his trouble went for nothing. Not the slightest trace of the boy could be found. So he was mourned for a season, regretted and then forgotten; the prince adopted the grape-arbor.

I saw the prince once. I do not blame the Princess Hildegarde for her rebellion. The prince was not only old, he was fat and ugly, with little, elephant-like eyes that were always vein-shot, restless and full of mischief. He *might* have made a good father, but I have nothing to prove this. Those bottles of sparkling Moselle which he failed to dispose of to the American trade he gave to his brother in Barscheit or drank himself. He was sixty-eight years old. A nephew, three times removed, was waiting for the day when he should wobble around in the prince's shoes. He was a lieutenant in the duke's bodyguard, a quick-tempered, heady chap. Well, he never wobbled around in his uncle's shoes, for he never got the chance.

I hadn't been in Barscheit a week before I heard a great deal about the princess. She was a famous horsewoman. This made me extremely anxious to meet her. Yet for nearly six months I never even got so much as a glimpse of her. Half the six months she was traveling through Austria, and the other half she kept out of my way. Not intentionally; she knew nothing of my existence; simply, fate moved us about blindly. At court she was invariably indisposed, and at the first court ball she retired before I arrived.

I got up at all times, galloped over all roads, but never did I see her. And she rode alone, too, part of the time. And the one picture of her which I was lucky enough to see had been taken when she was six, and meant nothing to me in the way of identification. For all I know I might have passed her on the road. She became to me the Princess in the Invisible Cloak, passing me often and doubtless deriding my efforts to discern her. My curiosity became alarming. I couldn't sleep for the thought of her. Finally we met, but the meeting was a great surprise to us both. This meeting happened during the great hubbub of which I have just written; and at the same time I met another who had great weight in my future affairs.

The princess and I became rather well acquainted—in what way you shall learn shortly, if you are patient. I was not a gentleman, according to her code, but, in the historic words of the drug clerk, I was something just as good. She honored me with a frank, disinterested friendship, which still exists. I have yet among my fading souvenirs of diplomatic service half a dozen notes commanding me to get up at dawn and ride around the lake, something like sixteen miles. She was almost as reckless a rider as myself. She was truly a famous rider, and a woman who sits well on a horse can never be aught but graceful. She was, in fact, youthful and charming, with the most magnificent black eyes I ever beheld in a Teutonic head; witty, besides, and a songstress of no ordinary talent. If I had been in love with her—which I solemnly vow I was not!—I should have called her beautiful and exhausted my store of complimentary adjectives.

The basic cause of all this turmoil, about which I am to spin my narrative, lay in her education. I hold that a German princess should never be educated save as a German. By this I mean to convey that her education should not go beyond German literature, German history, German veneration of laws, German manners and Ger-

man passivity and docility. The Princess Hildegarde had been educated in England and France, which simplifies everything, or, I should say, to be exact, complicates everything.

She possessed a healthy contempt for that what-d'-ye-call-it that hedges in a king. Having mingled with English-speaking people, she returned to her native land, her brain filled with the importance of feminine liberty of thought and action. Hence, she became the bramble which prodded the grand duke whichever way he turned. His days were filled with horrors, his nights with horses which did not have box-stalls in his stables. Never could he anticipate her in anything. On that day he placed guards around the palace she wrote verses or read modern fiction; the moment he relaxed his vigilance she was away on some heart-rending escapade. Didn't she scandalize the nobility by dressing up as a hussar and riding her famous black Mecklenberg cross-country? Hadn't she flirted outrageously with the French attaché and deliberately turned her back on the Russian minister, at the very moment, too, when negotiations were going on between Russia and Barscheit relative to a small piece of land in the Balkans? And, most terrible of all to relate, hadn't she ridden a shining bicycle up the Königstrasse, in broad daylight, and in bifurcated skirts, besides? I shall never forget the indignation of the press at the time of this last escapade, the stroke of apoplexy which threatened the duke, and the room with the barred window which the princess occupied one whole week.

They burned the offensive bicycle in the courtyard of the palace, ceremoniously, too, and the princess had witnessed this solemn *auto da fé* from her barred window. It is no strain upon the imagination to conjure up the picture of her fine rage, her threatening hands, her compressed lips, her tearless, flashing eyes, as she saw her beautiful new wheel writhe and twist on the blazing fagots. But what the

deuce was a poor duke to do with a niece like this?

For a time I feared that the United States and the grand duchy of Barscheit would sever diplomatic relations. The bicycle was, unfortunately, of American make, and the manufacturers wrote me personally that they considered themselves grossly insulted over the action of the duke. Diplomatic notes were exchanged, and I finally prevailed upon the duke to state that he held the wheel harmless and that his anger had been directed solely against his niece. This letter was duly forwarded to the manufacturers, who, after the manner of their kind, carefully altered the phrasing and used it in their magazine advertisements. They were so far appeased that they offered me my selection from the private stock. Happily the duke never read anything but the *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Jugend*, and thus war was averted.

Later an automobile agent visited the town—at the secret bidding of her highness—but he was so unceremoniously hustled over the frontier that his teeth must have rattled like a dancer's castanets. It was a great country for expeditiousness, as you will find, if you do me the honor to follow me to the end.

So the grand duke swore that his niece should wed Dopplekinn, and the princess vowed that she would not. The man who had charge of my horses said that one of the palace maids had recounted to him a dialogue which had taken place between the duke and his niece. As I was anxious to be off on the road I was compelled to listen to his gossip.

THE GRAND DUKE—In two months' time you shall wed the Prince of Dopplekinn.

THE PRINCESS—What! that old red-nosed? Never! I shall marry only where I love.

THE GRAND DUKE—Only where you love! (*Sneers.*) One would think, to hear you talk, that you were capable of loving something.

THE PRINCESS—You have yet to

learn. I warn you not to force me. I promise to do something scandalous. I will marry one of the people—a man.

THE GRAND DUKE—Bah! (*Swears softly on his way down to the stables.*)

But the princess had in her mind a plan which, had it gone safely through, would have added many gray hairs to the duke's scanty collection. It was a mighty ingenious plan, too, for a woman to figure out.

In his attitude toward the girl the duke stood alone. Behind his back his ministers wore out their shoes in waiting on the caprices of the girl, while the grand duchess, half blind and half deaf, openly worshiped her wilful but wholly adorable niece, and abetted her in all her escapades. So far as the populace was concerned, she was the daughter of the favorite son, dead these eighteen years, and that was enough for them. Whatever she did was right and proper. But the hard-headed duke had the power to say what should be what, and he willed it that the Princess Hildegarde should marry his old comrade in arms, the Prince of Dopplekinn.

But I haven't explained how I finally did meet the princess. As I have already remarked, I used frequently to take long rides into the country, and sometimes I did not return till the following day. My clerk was always on duty, and the work never appeared to make him round-shouldered.

I had ridden horses for years, and to throw a leg over a good mount was to me one of the greatest pleasures in the world. I delighted in stopping at the old feudal inns, in studying the stolid German peasant, in drinking from steins uncracked these hundred years, in inspecting ancient armor and gathering trifling romances attached thereto. And often I have had the courage to stop at some quaint, crumbling schloss or castle and ask for a night's lodging for myself and horse. Seldom, if ever, did I meet with a refusal. I possessed the whim-

sical habit of picking out strange roads and riding on till night swooped down from the snow-capped mountains. I had a bit of poetry in my system that had never been completely worked out, and I was always imagining that at the very next schloss or inn I was to hit upon some delectable adventure. I was only twenty-eight, and inordinately fond of my Dumas.

I rode in gray whipcord breeches, tan boots, a blue serge coat, white stock, and never a hat or cap till the snow blew. I used to laugh when the peasants asked leave to lend me a cap or to run back and find the one I had presumably lost.

One night the delectable adventure for which I was always seeking came my way, and I was wholly unprepared for it.

I had taken the highway south, that which seeks the valley beyond the lake. The moon-film lay mistily upon everything, on the far-off lake, on the great upheavals of stone and glacier above me, on the long white road that stretched out before me, ribbon-wise. High up the snow on the mountains resembled huge opals set in amethyst. I was easily twenty-five miles from the city; that is to say, I had been in the saddle some six hours. Nobody but a king's messenger will ride a horse more than five miles an hour. I cast about for a place to spend the night. There was no tavern in sight, and the hovels I had passed during the closing hour offered no shelter for my horse. Suddenly, around a bend in the road, I saw the haven I was seeking. It was a rambling, tottering old castle, standing in the centre of a cluster of firs; and the tiles of the roofs and the ivy of the towers were shining silvern with the heavy fall of dew.

Lady Chloe sniffed her kind, whinnied, and broke into a trot. She knew sooner than I that there was life beyond the turn. We rode up to the gate, and I dismounted and stretched myself. I tried the gate. The lock hung loosely, like a paralytic hand. Evidently those inside had nothing

to fear from those outside. I grasped an iron bar and pushed in the gate, Chloe following knowingly at my heels. I could feel the crumbling rust on my gloves. Chloe whinnied again, and there came an answering whinny from somewhere in the rear of the castle. Somebody must be inside, I reasoned.

There were lights in the left wing, but this part of the castle was surrounded by an empty moat, damp and weedy. This was not to be entered save by a ladder. There was a great central door, however, which had a modern appearance. The approach was a broad graveled walk. I tied Lady Chloe to a tree, knotted the bridle-reins above her neck to prevent her from putting her restless feet into them, and proceeded toward the door.

Of all the nights this was the one on which my usually lively imagination reposed. I was hungry and tired, and I dare say my little mare was. I wasn't looking for an adventure; I didn't want any adventure; I wanted nothing in the world but a meal and a bed. But for the chill of the night air—the breath of the mountain is cold at night—I should have been perfectly willing to sleep in the open. Down drawbridge, up portcullis!

I boldly climbed the steps and groped around for the knocker. It was broken and useless, like the lock on the gate. And never a bell could I find. I swore softly and became impatient. People in Barscheit did not usually live in this slovenly fashion. What sort of a place was this?

Suddenly I grew erect, every fiber in my body tense and expectant.

A voice, lifted in song! A great, penetrating yet silkily mellow voice; a soprano; heavenly, not to say ghostly, coming as it did from the heart of this gloomy ruin of stone and iron. The jewel song from "Faust," too! How the voice rose, fell, soared again with intoxicating waves of sound! What permeating sweetness! I stood

there, a solitary listener, so far as I knew, bewildered, my heart beating hard and fast. I forgot my hunger.

Had I stumbled upon one of my dreams at last? Had Romance suddenly relented, as a coquette sometimes relents? For a space I knew not what to do. Then, with a shrug—I have never been accused of lacking courage—I tried once more, by the aid of a match, to locate a bell. There was absolutely nothing; and the beating of my riding-crop on the panels of that huge door would have been as noisy as a feather. I grasped the knob and turned it impatiently. Behold! the door opened without sound, and I stepped into the hallway, which was velvet black.

The wonderful voice went on. I paused, with hands outstretched. Supposing I bumped into something? I took a step forward, another and another; I swung my crop in a half-circle; all was vacancy. I took another step, this time in the direction of the voice . . . and started back with a smothered curse. Bang! I had run into a suit of old armor, the shield of which had clattered to the stone floor. As I have observed, I am not a coward, but I had all I could do to keep my legs—which were stirrup-weary, anyhow—from knocking under me!

Silence!

The song died. All over that great rambling structure not even the reassuring chirp of a cricket! I stood perfectly still. What the deuce should I do? Turn back? As I formed this question in my mind a draught of wind slammed the door shut. I was in for it, sure enough; I was positive that I could never relocate that door. There was nothing to do but wait, and wait with straining ears. They might be revolutionists, conspirators, counterfeiters. Heaven knows how long I waited.

Soon I heard a laugh, light, infectious, fearless! Then I heard a voice, soft and pleading.

"Don't go; in mercy's name, don't go, Gretchen! You may be killed!"

English! I had actually heard a voice speak my native tongue.

"Nonsense, Betty! I am not afraid of any ghost that ever walked, rode or floated."

"Ghost? It may be a burglar!"

"Or Steinbock! We shall find nothing."

Indeed!

"Nothing but a rat, bungling about in the armor." The laughter came again. "You are not *afraid*, Betty?"

"Only cautious. But how can you laugh? A rat?" cried a voice rather anxiously. "Why, they are as big as dogs!"

"But arrant cowards."

Ha! one of these voices spoke English as its birthright; the other spoke with an accent, that is to say, by adoption. Into what had I fallen? Whither had my hunger brought me? I was soon to learn.

There came a faint thread of light on one side of the hall, such as may be likened to that which filters under a door-sill. Presently this was followed by the sound of jangling brass rings. A heavy velvet portière—which I, being in darkness, had not discovered—slipped back. My glance, rather blinded, was first directed toward the flame of the candle. Then I lowered it—and surrendered forever and forever!

I beheld two faces in profile, as it were, one side in darkness, the other tinted and glowing like ancient ivory. I honestly confess to you that in all my wanderings—and they have been frequent and many—I never saw such an enchanting picture or two more exquisite faces. One peered forth with hesitant bravery, the other—she who held the candle—with cold, tranquil inquiry.

All my fears, such as they were, left me instantly. Besides, I was not without a certain amount of gallantry and humor. I stepped squarely into the light and bowed.

"Ladies, I am indeed not a ghost, but I promise you that I shall be if I am not offered something to eat at once!"

Tableau!

II

"WHAT are you doing here?" asked she with the candle, her midnight eyes drawing down her brows into a frown of displeasure.

I bowed. "To begin with, I find a gate unlocked, and being curious, I open it; then I find a door unlatched, and I enter. Under these unusual circumstances I am forced to ask the same question of you; what are you doing here in this ruined castle? If it isn't ruined, it is deserted, which amounts to the same thing." This *was* impertinent, especially on the part of a self-invited guest.

"That is my affair, sir. I have a right here, now and at all times." Her voice was cold and authoritative. "There is an inn six miles farther down the road; this is a private residence. Certainly you cannot remain here overnight."

"Six miles?" I echoed dismally. "Madame, if I have seemed impertinent, pardon me. I have been in the saddle six hours. I have ridden nearly thirty miles since this afternoon. I am dead with fatigue. At least give me time to rest a bit before taking up the way again. I admit that the manner of my entrance was informal; but how was I to know? There was not even a knocker on the door by which to make known my presence to you." The truth is, I did not want to go at once. No one likes to stumble into an adventure—enchanting as this promised to be—and immediately pop out of it. An idea came to me, serviceable rather than brilliant. "I am an American. My German is poor. I speak no French. I have lost my way; it would seem I am hungry and tired. To ride six miles farther right now is a physical impossibility; and I am very fond of my horse."

"He says he is hungry, Gretchen," said the English girl, dropping easily into the French language as a vehicle of speech. (I was a wretch, I know, but I simply could not help telling that lie; I didn't want to go; and they *might* be conspirators.) "Besides,"

went on the girl, "he looks like a gentleman."

"We cannot always tell a gentleman in the candle-light," replied Gretchen, eying me critically and shrewdly and suspiciously.

As for me, I gazed from one to the other, inquiringly, after the manner of one who hears a tongue not understandable.

"He's rather nice," was the English girl's comment; "and his eyes strike me as being too steady to be dishonest."

I had the decency to burn in the ears. I had taken the step, so now I could not draw back. I sincerely hoped that they would not exchange any embarrassing confidences. When alone women converse upon many peculiar topics; and conversing in a tongue which they supposed to be unknown to me, these two were virtually alone.

"But, my dear child," the other returned argumentatively, "we cannot offer hospitality to a strange man this night of all nights. Think of what is to be accomplished."

(So something was to be accomplished? I was right, then, in deceiving them. To accomplish something on a night like this, far from habitation, had all the air of a conspiracy.)

"Feed him and his horse, and I'll undertake to get you rid of him before that detestable Steinbock comes. Besides, he might prove a valuable witness in drawing up the papers."

(Papers?)

"I never thought of that. It will not do to trust Steinbock wholly." Gretchen turned her searching eyes once more upon me. I confess that I had some difficulty in steadying my own. There are some persons to whom one cannot lie successfully; one of them stood before me. But I rather fancy I passed through the ordeal with at least half a victory. "Will you go your way after an hour's rest?" she asked, speaking in the familiar tongue.

"I promise." It was easy to make this promise. I wasn't a diplomat for nothing. I knew how to hang on, to dodge under, to go about.

"Follow me," Gretchen commanded briefly.

(Who was she? What was going on?)

We passed through the gloomy salon. A damp, musty odor struck my sense of smell. I was positive that the castle was uninhabited, save for this night. Three candles burned on the mantel, giving to the gloom a mysterious, palpitating effect. The room beyond was the dining-room, richly paneled in wine-colored mahogany. This was better; it was cheerful. A log crackled in the fireplace. There were plenty of candles. There was a piano, too. This belonged to the castle; a heavy tarpaulin covering lay heaped at one side. There was a mahogany sideboard that would have sent a collector of antiques into raptures, and a table upon which lay the remains of a fine supper. My mouth watered. I counted over the good things: roast pheasant, pink ham, a sea-food salad, asparagus, white bread and unsalted butter, an alcohol-burner over which hung a teapot, and besides all this there was a pint of La Rose which was but half emptied. Have you ever been in the saddle half a day? If you have, you will readily appreciate the appetite that was warring with my curiosity.

"Eat," bade she who was called Gretchen.

"And my horse?"

"Where is it?"

"Tied to a tree by the gate."

She struck a Chinese gong. From the kitchens appeared an elderly servant who looked to me more fitted to handle a saber than a carving-knife; at least, the scar on his cheek impressed me with this idea. (I found out later that he was an old soldier, who lived alone in the castle as care-taker.)

"Take this gentleman's horse to the stables and feed him," said Gretchen. "You will find the animal by the gate."

With a questioning glance at me the old fellow bowed and made off.

I sat down, and the two women brought the various plates and placed them within reach. Their beautiful

hands flashed before my eyes and now and then a sleeve brushed my shoulders.

"Thank you," I murmured. "I will eat first, and then make my apologies."

This remark caught the fancy of Gretchen. She laughed. It was the same laughter I had heard while standing in the great hall.

"Will you drink tea, or would you prefer to finish this Bordeaux?" she asked pleasantly.

"The wine, if you please; otherwise the effect of the meal and the long hours in the wind will produce sleepiness. And it would be frightfully discourteous on my part to fall asleep in my chair. I am very hard to awake."

The English girl poured out the wine and passed the goblet to me. I touched my lips to the glass, and bent my head politely. Then I resolutely proceeded to attack the pheasant and ham. I must prove to these women that at least I was honest in regard to my hunger. I succeeded in causing a formidable portion of the food to disappear.

And then I noticed that neither of the young women seated herself while I ate. I understood. There was no hostility in this action; nothing but formality. They declined to sit in the presence of an unwelcome stranger, thus to deny his equality from a social point of view. I readily accepted this decision on their part. They didn't know who I was. They stood together by the fireplace and carried on a conversation in low tones.

How shall I describe them? The elder of the two, the one who seemed to possess all the authority, could not have been more than twenty. Her figure was rather matured, yet it was delicate. Her hair was tawny, her skin olive in shade and richly tinted at the cheek-bones. Her eyes, half framed by thick, black-arching brows, reminded me of woodland pools in the dusk of evening; depths unknown, cool, refreshing in repose. The chin was resolute, the mouth was large but shapely and brilliant, the nose pos-

sessed those delicate nostrils of all sensitive beings—that is to say, thoroughbreds; altogether a confusing, bewildering beauty. At one moment I believed her to be Spanish, at the next I was positive that she was Teutonic. I could not discover a single weak point, unless impulsiveness shall be called weakness; this sign of impulsiveness was visible in the lips.

The other—well, I couldn't help it. It was kismet, fate, the turn in the road, what you will. I fell heels over head in love with her at once. She was charming, exquisite, one of those delicate creatures who always appear in enchantments; a Bouguereau child grown into womanhood, made to fit the protecting frame of a man's arms. Love steals into the heart when we least expect him; and then, to get him out! Eyes she had as blue as the Ægean Sea in windy days, blue as the cloud-winnowed sky of a winter's twilight, blue as sapphires—Irish eyes! Her hair was as dark and silken as a plume from the wings of night. (Did I not say that I had some poetry in my system?) The shape of her mouth Never mind; I can recall only the mad desire to kiss it. A graceful figure, a proud head, a slender hand, a foot so small that I wondered if it really poised, balanced or supported her young body. Tender she must be, and loving, enclitical rather than erect like her authoritative companion. She was adorable.

All this inventory of feminine charms was taken by furtive glances, sometimes caught—or were they taking an inventory of myself? Presently my appetite became singularly submissive. Hunger often is satisfied by the feeding of the eyes. I dropped my napkin on the table and pushed back my chair. They ceased conversing.

"Ladies," said I courteously, "I offer you my sincere apologies for this innocent intrusion." I looked at my watch. "I believe that I was given an hour's respite. So, then, I have thirty minutes to my account."

The women gazed at each other. One laughed, and the other smiled; it was the English girl who laughed this time. I liked the sound of it better than any I had yet heard.

(Pardon another parenthesis. I hope you haven't begun to think that *I* am the hero of this comedy. Let it be farthest from your thoughts. I am only a passive bystander.)

"I sincerely trust that your hunger is appeased," said the one who had smiled.

"It is, thank you." I absently fumbled in my coat pockets, then guiltily dropped my hands. What a terrible thing force of habit is!

"You may smoke," said the Bouguereau child who was grown into womanhood. Wasn't that fine of her? And wasn't it rather observant, too? I learned later that she had a brother who was fond of tobacco. To her eyes my movement was a familiar one.

"With your kind permission," said I gratefully. I hadn't had a smoke in four hours.

I owned to a single good cigar, the last of my importation. I lighted it and blew forth a snowy billow of heavenly aroma. I know something about human nature, even the feminine side of it. A presentable young man with a roll of aromatic tobacco seldom fails to win the confidence of those about him. With that cloud of smoke the raw edge of formality smoothed down.

"Had you any particular destination?" asked Gretchen.

"None at all. The road took my fancy, and I simply followed it."

"Ah! that is one of the pleasures of riding—to go wherever the inclination bids. I ride."

We were getting on famously.

"Do you take long journeys?" I inquired.

"Often."

"It is the most exhilarating of sports," said the Enchantment. "The scenery changes, there are so many things that charm and engage your interest, the mountains, the waterways, the old ruins. Have you ever

whistled to the horses afield and watched them come galloping down to the wall? It is fine. In England . . .” But her mouth closed suddenly. She was talking to a stranger.

I love enthusiasm in a woman. It colors her cheeks and makes her eyes sparkle. I grew a bit bolder.

“I heard a wonderful voice as I approached the castle,” said I.

Gretchen shrugged.

“I haven’t heard its equal outside of Berlin or Paris,” I went on.

“Paris?” said Gretchen, laying a neat little trap for me into which my conceit was soon to tumble me. “Paris is a marvelous city.”

“There is no city to equal it. Inso-much as we three shall never meet again, will you not do me the honor to repeat that jewel song from ‘Faust’?” My audacity did not impress her in the least.

“You can scarcely expect me to give a supper to a stranger and then sing for him, besides,” said Gretchen, a chill again stealing into her tones. “These Americans!” she observed to her companion in French.

I laid aside my cigar, approached the piano, and sat down. I struck a few chords and found the instrument to be in remarkably good order. I played two of Chopin’s “Polonaises,” I tinkled Grieg’s “Papillons,” then I ceased.

“That is to pay for my supper,” I explained.

Next I played “Le Courier,” and when I had finished that I turned again, rising.

“That is to pay for my horse’s supper.”

Gretchen’s good humor returned.

“Whoever you are, sir,” her tone no longer repellent, “you are amusing. Pray, tell us whom we have the honor to entertain?”

“I haven’t the vaguest idea who my hostess is,” evasively.

“It is quite out of the question. You are the intruder.”

“Call me Mr. Intruder, then,” said I.

It was, you will agree, a novel ad-

venture. I was beginning to enjoy it hugely.

“Who do you suppose this fellow is?” Gretchen asked.

“He says he is an American, and I believe he is. What Americans are in Barscheit?”

“I know of none at all. What shall we do to get rid of him?”

All this was carried on with unstudied rudeness. They were women of high and noble quality; and as I was an interloper, I could take no exception to a conversation in a language I had stated I did not understand. If they were rude, I had acted in a manner unbecoming a gentleman. Still, I was somewhat on the defensive. I took out my watch. My hour was up.

“I regret that I must be off,” I said ruefully. “It is much pleasanter here than on the road.”

“I cannot ask you to remain here. You will find the inn a very comfortable place for the night,” was Gretchen’s suggestion.

“Before I go, may I ask in what manner I might serve as a witness?” Ere the words had fully crossed my lips I recognized that my smartness had caused me to commit an unpardonable blunder for a man who wished to show up well in an adventure of this sort. (But fate had a hand in it, as presently you shall see.)

Gretchen laughed, but the sound was harsh and metallic. She turned to her companion, who was staring at me with startled eyes.

“What did I tell you? You cannot tell a gentleman in the candle-light.” To me she said: “I thought as much. You have heard ‘Faust’ in Paris, but you know nothing of the French language. You claimed to be a gentleman, yet you have permitted us to converse in French.”

“Was it polite of you to use it?” I asked. “All this,” with a wave of the hand, “appears mysterious. This is not a habitated residence. Your presence here is even less satisfactorily explained than mine. If I denied the knowledge of French it was because I wasn’t sure of my surroundings. It

was done in self-defense rather than in the desire to play a trick. And in this language you speak of witnesses, of papers, of the coming of a man you do not trust. It looks very much like a conspiracy." I gathered up my gloves and riding-crop. I believed that I had extricated myself rather well.

"This is my castle," said Gretchen, gently shaking off the warning hand of her companion. "If I desire to occupy it for a night, who shall gainsay me? If I leave the latches down, that is due to my knowledge that I fear no one. Now, sir, you have eaten the bread of my table, and I demand to know who you are. If you do not tell me at once, I shall be forced to confine you here till I am ready to leave."

"Confine me!" nonplussed. This was more than I had reckoned on.

"Yes." She reached out to strike the gong. (I cannot be blamed for surrendering so tamely. I didn't know that the old servitor was the only man around.)

"I am the American consul at Barscheit."

The two women drew together instinctively, as if one desired to protect the other from some unknown calamity. What the deuce was it all about? All at once Gretchen thrust aside her friend and approached. The table was between us, and she rested her hands upon it. Our glances met and clashed.

"Did the duke send you here?" she demanded repellently.

"The duke?" I was getting deeper than ever. "The duke?"

"Yes. I am the Princess Hildegarde."

III

THE Princess Hildegarde of Barscheit! My gloves and riding-crop slipped from my nerveless fingers to the floor. A numbing, wilting sensation wrinkled my spine. The Princess Hildegarde of Barscheit! She stood opposite me, the woman—ought I not to say girl?—for whom I had been seeking, after a fashion, all these months! The beautiful madcap who

took the duchy by the ears, every now and then, and tweaked them! The princess herself, here in this lonely old castle into which I had so carelessly stumbled! Romance, enchantment! Oddly enough, the picture of her riding a bicycle flashed through my brain, and this was followed by another, equally engaging, the hussar who rode cross-country, to the horror of the conservative element at court.

"The Princess Hildegarde!" I murmured stupidly.

"Yes. I have asked you a question, sir. Or shall I put the question in French?" ironically. "Was it the duke who sent you here?"

There was a look in her superb eyes which told me that it would have been to her infinite pleasure to run a sword through my black and villainous heart. Presently I recovered. With forced calm I stooped and collected my gloves and crop.

"Your highness, what the deuce has the duke to do with my affairs, or I with his? As an American, you would scarcely expect me to meddle with your private affairs. You are the last person in the world I thought to meet this night. I represent the United States in this country, and though I am inordinately young, I have acquired the habit of attending to my own affairs."

From the angry face in front of me I turned to the dismayed face beyond. There must have been a question in my glance. The young woman drew herself up proudly.

"I am the Honorable Betty Moore."

(The princess's schoolmate in England!)

Her highness stood gnawing the knuckle of a forefinger, undecided as to what path of action to enter, to reach a satisfactory end. My very rudeness convinced her more than anything else that I spoke the truth.

"How, then, did you select this particular road?" still entertaining some doubt.

"It is a highway, free to all. But I have already explained that," I answered quietly. I moved deliberately

toward the door, but with a cat-like movement she sprang in front of me. "Well, your highness?"

"Wait!" she commanded, extending an authoritative arm (lovely, too!). "Since you are here, and since you know who I am, you must remain."

"Must?" I repeated, taken aback.

"Must! My presence here ought not to be known to anyone. When you witness that which shall take place here tonight, you will understand." Her tone lost its evenness; it trembled and became a bit wild.

"In what manner may I be of service to your highness?" I asked pleasantly, laying aside my gloves and crop again. "I can easily give you my word of honor as a gentleman not to report your presence here; but if I am forced to remain, I certainly demand——"

"Desire," she corrected, the old fire in her eyes.

"Thank you. I desire, then, to know the full reason; for I cannot be a party to anything which may reflect upon the consulate. For myself, I do not care." What harebrained escapade was now in the air?

The princess walked over to the mantel and rested her arms upon it, staring wide-eyed into the fire. Several minutes passed. I waited patiently; but to tell the truth I was on fire with curiosity. At length my patience was rewarded.

"You have heard that I am to marry the Prince of Dopplekinn," she began.

I nodded.

"Doubtless you have also heard of my determination not to marry him," she went on.

Again I nodded.

"Well, I am not going to marry him."

I was seized with the desire to laugh, but dared not. What had all this to do with my forced detainment in the castle?

"Betty," said the princess, turning imploringly to her companion (what a change!), "you tell him."

"I?" The Honorable Betty drew back.

(Had they kidnapped old Dopplekinn? I wondered).

"I cannot tell him," cried her highness miserably, "I simply cannot. You must do it, Betty. It is now absolutely necessary that he should know everything; it is absolutely vital that he be present. Perhaps heaven has sent him. Do you understand? Now, tell him!"

And, wonders to behold! she who but a few minutes gone had been a princess in everything, cold, seeing, tranquil, she fled from the room. (Decidedly this was growing interesting. What *had* they done?) Thus, the Honorable Betty Moore and his excellency, the American consul at Barscheit, were left staring into each other's eyes fully a minute.

"You will, of course, pledge me your word of honor?" She who had recently been timid now became cool and even-pulsed.

"If in pledging it I am asked to do nothing to discredit my office. I am not an independent individual," smiling to put her more at ease. (I haven't the least doubt that I would have committed any sort of folly had she required it of me.)

"You have my word, sir, that you will be asked to do nothing dishonorable. On the other hand, you will confer a great favor upon her highness, who is in great trouble and is seeking a way to escape it."

"Command me," said I promptly.

"Her highness is being forced into marriage with a man who is old enough to be her grandfather. She holds him in horror, and will go to any length to make this marriage an impossibility. For my part, I have tried to convince her of the futility of resisting her royal uncle's will." (Sensible little Britisher!) "What she is about to do will be known only to four persons, one of whom is a downright rascal."

"A rascal?" slipped my lips, half unconsciously. "I trust that I haven't given you that impression," I added eagerly. (A rascal? The plot was thickening to formidable opaqueness.)

"No, no!" she cried hastily, with a

flash of summer on her lips. (What is more charming than an English woman with a clear sense of the humorous?) "You haven't given me that impression at all."

"Thank you." My vanity expanded under the genial warmth of this knowledge. It was quite possible that she looked upon me favorably.

"To proceed. There is to be a kind of mock marriage here tonight, and you are to witness it." She watched me sharply.

I frowned.

"Patience! Not literally a mock marriage, but the filling out of a bogus certificate."

"I do not understand at all."

"You have heard of Hermann Steinbock, a cashiered officer?"

"Yes. I understand that he is the rascal to whom you refer."

"Well, this certificate is to be filled out completely. To outwit the duke, her highness commits . . ."

"A forgery."

"It is a terrible thing to do, but she has gone too far to withdraw now. She is to become the wife of Hermann Steinbock. She wishes to show the certificate to the duke."

"But the banns have been made public."

"That does not matter."

"But why detain me?" I was growing restless. It was all folly, and no good would come of it.

"It is necessary that a gentleman should be present. The care-taker, while thoroughly honest and trustworthy, is not a gentleman. I have said that Steinbock is a rascal. As I review the events, I begin to look upon your arrival as timely. Steinbock is not a reliable quantity."

"I begin to perceive."

"He is to receive one thousand crowns for his part in the ceremony; then he is to leave the country."

"But the priest's signature, the notary's seal, the iron-clad formalities which attend all these things!" I stammered.

"You will recollect that her highness is a princess of the blood. Seldom is

she refused anything in Barscheit." She went to a small secretary and produced a certificate, duly sealed and signed. There lacked nothing but Steinbock's name.

"But the rascal will boast about it! He may blackmail all of you. He may convince the public that he has really married her highness."

"I think not. We have not moved in this blindly. Steinbock we know to have forged the name of the minister of finance. We hold this sword above his head. And if he should speak or boast of it, your word would hold greater weight than his. Do you understand now?"

"Yes, I understand. But I believe that I am genuinely sorry to have blundered into this castle tonight."

"Oh, if you lack courage—" carelessly.

I laughed. "I am not afraid of twenty Steinbocks."

Her laughter echoed mine. "Come, Mr. . . . By the way, I believe I do not know your name."

"Warrington—Arthur Warrington."

"That is a very good English name, and a gentleman possessing it will never leave two women in a predicament like this. You will understand that we dare not trust anyone at court. Relative to her highness, the duke succeeds in bribing all."

"But a rascal like Steinbock!"

"I know," a bit wearily.

"It is pardonable to say that I believe her highness has been very foolish."

The girl made a gesture which conceded this fact. "It is too late to retreat, as I have told you. Steinbock is already on the way. We must trust him. But you?"

"After all, what's a consulate amount to?"

This seemed to be answer enough. She extended her hand in a royal fashion. I took it in one of mine, bent and kissed it respectfully. Apparently she had expected the old-fashioned hand-shake familiar to our common race, for I observed that she started as my lips came into contact with the

back of her hand. As for me, when my lips touched the satin flesh I knew that it was all over.

"Your highness!" she called.

The princess returned. She looked at me with a mixture of fierceness and defiance, humility and supplication. I had always supposed her to be a sort of hobbledehoy; instead, she was one of those rare creatures who possess all the variant moods of the sex. I could readily imagine all the young fellows falling violently in love with her; all the young fellows save one. I glanced furtively at the Honorable Betty.

"He knows all?" asked her highness, her chin tilted aggressively.

"Everything."

"What must you think of me?" There was that in her highness's tone which dared me to express any opinion that was not totally complimentary.

"I am not sufficiently well-born to pass an opinion upon your highness's actions," I replied, with excusable irony.

"Excellent!" she exclaimed. "I have grown weary of sycophants. You are not afraid of me at all."

"Not in the slightest degree," I declared.

"You will not regret what you are about to do. I can make it very pleasant for you in Barscheit—or very unpleasant." But this threatening supplement was made harmless by the accompanying smile.

"May I offer the advice of rather a worldly man?"

"Well?"

"When Steinbock comes bid him go about his business."

The Honorable Betty nodded approvingly, but her highness shrugged.

"Since you are decided," and I bowed. "Now, what time does this fellow put in his appearance?"

Her highness beamed upon the Honorable Betty. "I like the way he says 'this fellow'; it reassures me. He is due at nine o'clock; that is to say, in half an hour. I will give you these directions. I do not wish Steinbock to know of your presence here. You will hide in the salon, close to the portières, within call. Moreover, I shall

have to impose upon you the disagreeable duty of playing the listener. Let nothing escape your ear or your eye. I am not certain of this fellow Steinbock, though I hold a sword above his head."

"But where are your men?" I asked.

She smiled. "There is no one here but Leopold."

"Your highness to meet Steinbock alone?"

"I have no fear of him; he knows who I am."

"Everything shall be done as you wish." I secretly hoped I might have the opportunity to punch Steinbock's head.

"Thank you." The transition of her moods always left me in wonder. "Play something; it is impossible to talk." She perched herself on the broad arm of the Honorable Betty's chair, and the arms of the two women went lovingly around one another.

It was something for a man to gain the confidence, in so short a time, of two such women. I felt as brave as Bayard. So I sat down before the piano and played. My two accomplishments are horseback riding and music, and I candidly tell you that I am as reckless at one as at the other. I had a good memory. I played mostly from Chaminade, as her fancies are always airy and agreeable and unmelancholy. I was attacking "The Flatterer" when her highness touched my arm.

"Hark!"

We all listened intently. The sound of beating hoofs came distinctly. A single horseman was galloping along the highway toward the castle. It grew nearer and nearer. Presently the sound ceased to be. I rose quietly.

"It is time I made myself scarce, for doubtless this rider is the man."

The princess paled for a moment, while her companion nervously plucked at the edges of her handkerchief.

"Go," said the former; "and be watchful."

I then took up my position behind the portières. Truly I had stumbled into an adventure; but how to stumble

out again? If the duke got wind of it, it would mean my recall, and I was of a mind, just then, that I was going to be particularly fond of Barscheit.

All was silent. A door closed, and then came the tread of feet. I peered through the portières shortly to see the entrance of two men, one of whom was the old care-taker. His companion was a dark, handsome fellow, of Hungarian gipsy type. There was a devil-may-care air about him that fitted him well. It was Steinbock. He was dressed with scrupulous care in spite of the fact that he wore riding clothes. It is possible that he recognized the importance of the event. One did not write one's name under a princess's every day, even though in mockery. There was a half-smile on his face that I did not like.

"Your highness sees that I am prompt," uncovering.

"It is well. Let us proceed at once to conclude the matter in hand," she said.

"Wholly at your service!"

(Hang the fellow's impudence! How dared he use that jovial tone?)

I heard the crackle of parchment. The certificate was being unfolded. (It occurred to me that while she was about it the princess might just as well have forged the rascal's name and wholly dispensed with his services. The whole affair struck me as being ineffective; nothing would come of it. If she tried to make the duke believe that she had married Steinbock, her uncle would probe the matter to the bottom, and in the end cover her with ridicule. But you cannot tell a young woman anything, not when she is a princess and in the habit of having her own way. It is remarkable how stupid clever women can be at times. The Honorable Betty understood, but her highness would not be convinced. Thus she suffered this needless affront. Pardon this parenthesis, but when one talks from behind a curtain the parenthesis is the only available thing.) There was silence. I saw Steinbock poise the pen, then scribble on the parchment. It was done. I stirred restlessly.

"There!" cried Steinbock. His voice did not lack a certain triumph. "And now for the duplicate."

Her highness stuffed the document into the bosom of her dress. "There will be no duplicate." The frigidity of her tones would have congealed the blood of an ordinary rascal. But Steinbock was not ordinary.

"But suppose the duke comes to me for verification?" he reasoned.

"You will be on the other side of the frontier. Here are your thousand crowns."

The barb of her contempt penetrated even his thick epidermis. His smile hardened.

"I was once a gentleman; I did not always accept money for aiding in shady transactions."

"Neither your sentiments nor your opinions are required. Now, observe me carefully," continued her highness. "I shall give you twenty-four hours to cross the frontier in any direction you choose. If after that time you are found in Barscheit, I promise to hand you over to the police."

"It has been a great day," said the rascal, with a laugh. "A thousand crowns!"

I separated the portières an inch. He stood at the side of the piano, upon which he leaned an elbow. He was certainly handsome, much sought after by women of a low class. The princess stood at Steinbock's left and the Honorable Betty at his right, erect, their faces expressing nothing, so forced was the repose.

"I never expected so great an honor. To wed a princess, when that princess is your highness! Faith, it is fine!"

"You may go at once," interrupted her highness, her voice rising a key. "Remember, you have only twenty-four hours between you and prison. You are wasting valuable time."

"What! you wish to be rid of me so soon? Why, this is the bridal night. One does not part with one's wife at this rate."

Leopold, the groom, made a warning gesture.

"Come, Leopold, I must have my jest," laughed Steinbock.

"Within certain bounds," returned the old man phlegmatically. "It is high time you were off. You are foolhardy to match your chances with justice. Prison stares you in the face."

"Bah! Do you believe it?"

"It is a positive fact," added the princess.

"But to leave like this has the pang of death!" Steinbock remonstrated. "What! shall I be off without having even kissed the bride?"

"The bargain is concluded on all sides; you have your thousand crowns."

"But not love's tribute. I must have that. It is worth a thousand crowns. Besides," with a perceptible change in his manner, "shall I forget the contempt with which you have always looked upon me, even in the old days that were fair and prosperous? Scarcely! Opportunity is a thing that cannot be permitted to pass thus lightly." Then I observed his nose to wrinkle; he was sniffing. "Tobacco! I did not know that you smoked, Leopold."

"Begone!" cried the old fellow, his hands opening and shutting.

"Presently!" With a laugh he sprang toward her highness, but Leopold was too quick for him.

There was a short struggle, and I saw the valiant old man reel, fall and strike his head on the stone of the hearth. He lay perfectly motionless. So unusual was this scene to my eyes that for a time I was without any particular sense of movement. I stood like stone. With an evil laugh Steinbock sprang toward her highness again. Quick as light she snatched up my crop, which lay on the table, and struck the rascal full across the eyes, again and again and again, following him as he stepped backward. Her defense was magnificent. But, as fate determined to have it, Steinbock finally succeeded in wresting the stick from her grasp. He was wild with pain and chagrin. It was then I awoke to the fact that I was needed.

March 1905

I rushed out, hot with anger. I caught Steinbock by the collar just in time to prevent his lips from touching her cheek. I flung him to the floor, and knelt upon his chest. I am ashamed to confess it, but I recollect slapping the fellow's face as he struggled under me.

"You scoundrel!" I cried, breathing hard.

"Kill him!" whispered her highness. She was furious; the blood of her marauding ancestors swept over her cheeks, and if ever I saw murder in a woman's eyes it was at that moment.

"Hush, Hildegard, hush!" The English girl caught the princess in her arms and drew her back. "Don't let me hear you talk like that. It is all over."

"Get up," I said to Steinbock, freeing him.

He crawled to his feet. He was very much disordered, and there were livid welts on his face. He shook himself, eying me evilly. There was murder in his eyes, too.

"Empty your pockets of those thousand crowns!" peremptorily.

"I was certain that I smelled tobacco," he sneered. "It would seem that there are other bridegrooms than myself."

"Those crowns, or I'll break every bone in your body!" I balled my fists. Nothing would have pleased me better at that moment than to pummel the life out of him.

Slowly he drew out the purse. It was one of those limp silk affairs so much affected by our ancestors. He balanced it on his hand. Its ends bulged with gold and bank-notes. Before I was aware of his intention, he swung one end of it in so deft a manner that it struck me squarely between the eyes. There was a crash of glass, and he disappeared through the window. The blow dazed me only for a moment, and I was hot to be on his tracks. The Honorable Betty stopped me.

"He may shoot you!" she cried. "Don't go!"

Although half through the window, I crawled back, brushing my sleeves.

Something warm trickled down my nose.

"You have been cut!" exclaimed her highness.

"It is nothing. I beg of you to let me follow. It will be all over with that fellow at large."

"Not at all." Her highness's eyes sparkled wickedly. "He will make for the nearest frontier. He now knows that I shall not hesitate a moment to put his affairs in the hands of the police."

"He will boast of what he has done."

"Not till he has spent those thousand crowns." She crossed the room and knelt at the side of Leopold, dashing some water into his face. Presently he opened his eyes. "He is only stunned. Poor Leopold!"

I helped the old man to his feet, and he rubbed the back of his head grimly. He drew a revolver from his pocket.

"I had forgotten all about it," he said contritely. "Shall I follow him, your highness?"

"Let him go. It doesn't matter now. Betty, you were right, as you always are. I have played the part of a silly fool. I *would* have my own way in the matter. Well, I have this worthless paper. At least I can frighten the duke, and that is something."

"Oh, my dear, if only you would have listened to my advice!" the other girl said. There was deep discouragement in her tones. "I warned you so often that it would come to this end."

"Let us drop the matter entirely," said her highness.

I gazed admiringly at her . . . to see her sink suddenly into a chair and weep abandonedly! Leopold eyed her mournfully while the English girl rushed to her side and flung her arms around her soothingly.

"I am very unhappy," said the princess, lifting her head and shaking the tears from her eyes. "I am harassed on all sides; I am not allowed any will of my own. I wish I were a peasant! . . . Thank you, thank you! But for you that wretch would have kissed me." She held out her

hand to me, and I bent to one knee as I kissed it. She was worthy to be the wife of the finest fellow in all the world. I was very sorry for her, and thought many uncomplimentary things of the duke.

"I shall not ask you to forget my weakness," she said.

"It is already forgotten, your highness."

And under such circumstances I met the Princess Hildegarde of Barscheit; and I never betrayed her confidence until this writing, when I had her express permission.

Of Steinbock I never heard anything further. Thus, the only villain passes from the scene. As I have repeatedly remarked, doubtless to your weariness, this is not my story at all; but in parenthesis I may add that between the Honorable Betty Moore and myself there sprang up a friendship which later ripened into something infinitely stronger.

This, then, was the state of affairs when, one month later, Max Scharfenstein poked his handsome blond head over the frontier of Barscheit; cue (as the dramatist would say), enter hero.

IV

He came straight to the consulate, and I was so glad to see him that I sat him down in front of the sideboard and left orders that I was at home to no one. We had been classmates and roommates at college, and two better friends never lived. We spent the whole night in recounting the good old days, sighed a little over the departed ones, and praised or criticized the living. Hadn't they been times, though? The nights we had stolen up to Philadelphia to see the shows, the great Thanksgiving games in New York, the commencements, and all that!

Max had come out of the far West. He was a foundling who had been adopted by a wealthy German ranchman named Scharfenstein, which name Max assumed as his own, it being as good as any. Nobody knew anything

about Max's antecedents, but he was so big and handsome and jolly that no one in our class cared a hang. For all that he did not know his parentage, he was a gentleman, something that has to be bred in the bone. Once or twice I remember seeing him angry; in anger he was arrogant, deadly, but calm. In track-linen he was a god, for he was what few big men are, quick and agile. The big fellow who is catlike in his movements is the most formidable of athletes. One thing that invariably amused me was his inordinate love of uniforms. He would always stop when he saw a soldier or the picture of one, and his love of arms was little short of a mania. He was an expert fencer and a dead shot besides. (Pardon another parenthesis, but I feel it my duty to warn you that nobody fights a duel in this little history, and nobody gets killed.)

On leaving college he went in for medicine, and his appearance in the capital city of Barscheit was due obviously to the great medical college, famous the world over for its nerve specialists. This was Max's first adventure in the land of the gutturals. I explained to him, and partly unraveled, the tangle of laws; as to the language, he spoke that, not like a native, but as one.

Max was very fond of the society of women, and at college we used to twit him about it, for he was always eager to meet a new face, trusting that the new one might be the ideal for which he was searching.

"Well, you old Dutchman," said I, "have you ever found that ideal woman of yours?"

"Bah!" lighting a pipe. "She will never be found. A horse and a trusty dog for me; those two you may eventually grow to understand. Of course I don't say, if the woman came along—the right one—I might not go under. I'm philosopher enough to admit that possibility. I want her tall, hair like corn-silk, eyes like the corn-flower, of brilliant intellect, reserved, and dignified, and patient. I want a woman, not humorous, but

who understands humor, and I have never heard of one. So, you see, it's all smoke; and I never talk woman these times unless I'm smoking," with a gesture which explained that he had given up the idea altogether. "A doctor sees so much of women that he finally sees nothing of woman."

"Oh, if you resort to epigrams, I can see that it's all over."

"All over. I'm so used to being alone that I shouldn't know what to do with a wife." He puffed seriously.

Ah! the futility of our desires, of our castles, of our dreams! The complacency with which we jog along in what we deem to be our own particular groove! I recall a girl friend of my youth who was going to be a celibate, a great reformer, and toward that end was studying for the pulpit. She is now the mother of several children, the most peaceful and unorative woman I know. You see, humanity goes whirring over various side-tracks, thinking them to be the main line, till fate puts its peculiar but happy hand to the switch. Scharfenstein had been plugging away over rusty rails and grass-grown ties—till he came to Barscheit.

"Hope is the wings of the heart," said I, when I thought the pause had grown long enough. "You still hope?"

"In a way. If I recollect, you had an affair once," shrewdly.

I smoked on. I wasn't quite ready to speak.

"You were always on the hunt for ideals, too, as I remember; hope you find her."

"Max, my boy, I am solemnly convinced that I have."

"Good Lord, you don't mean to tell me that you are *hooked*?" he cried.

"I see no reason why you should use that particular tone," I answered stiffly.

"Oh, come now; tell me all about it. Who is she, and when's the wedding?"

"I don't know when the wedding's going to be, but I'm mighty sure that I have met the one girl. Max, there never was a girl like her. Witty she is, and wise; as beautiful as a summer's

dawn; merry and brave; rides, drives, plays the 'cello, dances like a moonshadow—and all that,” with a wave of the hand.

“You’ve got it bad. Remember how you used to write poetry at college? Who is she, if I may ask?”

“The Honorable Betty Moore, at present the guest of her highness the Princess Hildegarde,” with pardonable pride.

Max whistled. “You’re a lucky beggar. One by one we turn traitor to our native land. A Britisher! I never should have believed it of you, of the man whose class declamation was on the fiery subject of patriotism. But is it all on one side?”

“I don’t know, Max; sometimes I think so, and then I don’t.”

“How long have you known her?”

“Little more than a month.”

“A month? Everything moves swiftly these days, except European railway cars.”

“There’s a romance, Max, but another besides her is concerned, and I cannot tell you. Some day, when everything quiets down, I’ll get you into a corner with a bottle, and you will find it worth while.”

“The bottle?”

“Both.”

“From rumors I’ve heard, this princess is a great one for larks; rides bicycles and automobiles, and generally raises the deuce. What sort is she?”

“If you are going to remain in Barscheit, my boy, take a friendly warning. Do not make any foolish attempt to see her. She is more fascinating than a roulette table.”

This was a sly dig. Max smiled. A recent letter from him had told of an encounter with the goddess at Monte Carlo. Fortune had been all things but favorable.

“I’m not afraid of your princess; besides, I came here to study.”

“And study hard, my boy, study hard. Her highness is not the only pretty woman in Barscheit. There’s a raft of them.”

“I’ll paddle close to the shore,” with a smile.

“By the way, I’ll wake you up Thursday.”

“How?” lazily.

“A bout at Muller’s rathskeller. Half a dozen American lads, one of whom is called home. Just fixed up his passports for him. You’ll be as welcome as the flowers in the spring. Some of the lads will be in your classes.”

“Put me down. It will be like old times. I went to the reunion last June. Everything was in its place but you. Hang it, why can’t time always go on as it did then?”

“Time, unlike our watches, never has to go to the jeweler’s for repairs,” said I owlishly.

Max leaned over, took my bull-terrier by the neck and deposited him on his lap.

“Good pup, Artie—if he’s anything like his master. Three years, my boy, since I saw you. And here you are, doing nothing and lallygagging at court with the nobility. I wish I had had an uncle who was a senator. Pull is everything these days.”

“You Dutchman, I won this place on my own merit,” indignantly.

“Forget it!” grinning.

“You are impertinent.”

“But truthful, always.”

And then we smoked awhile in silence. The silent friend is the best of the lot. He knows that he hasn’t got to talk unless he wants to, and likewise that it is during these lapses of speech that the vine of friendship grows and tightens about the heart. When you sit beside a man and feel that you need not labor to entertain him it’s a good sign that you thoroughly understand each other. I was first to speak.

“I don’t understand why you should go in for medicine so thoroughly. It can’t be money, for heaven knows your father left you a yearly income which alone would be a fortune to me.”

“Chivalry shivers these days; the chill of money is on everything. A man must do something, a man who is neither a sloth nor a fool. A man must have something to put his whole heart into; and I despise money as

money. I give away the bulk of my income."

"Marry, and then you will not have to," I said flippantly.

"You're a sad dog. Do you know, I've been thinking about epigrams."

"No!"

"Yes. I find that an epigram is produced by the same cause that produces the pearl in the oyster."

"That is to say, a healthy mentality never superinduces an epigram? Fudge!" said I, yanking the pup from his lap on to mine. "According to your diagnosis, your own mind is diseased."

"Have I cracked an epigram?" with pained surprise.

"Well, you nearly bent one," I compromised.

Then we both laughed, and the pup started up and licked my face before I could prevent him.

"Did I ever show you this?" taking out a locket which was attached to one end of his watch-chain. He passed the trinket over to me.

"What is it?" I asked, turning it over and over.

"It's the one slender link that connects me with my babyhood. It was around my neck when Scharfenstein picked me up. Open it and look at the face inside."

I did so. A woman's face peered up at me. It might have been beautiful but for the troubled eyes and the drooping lips. It was German in type, evidently of high breeding. You can always readily distinguish between the noble and the peasant. From the woman's face I glanced at Max's. The eyes were something alike.

"Who do you think it is?" I asked, when I had studied the face sufficiently to satisfy my curiosity.

"I've a sneaking idea that it may be my mother. Scharfenstein found me toddling about in a railroad station, and that locket was the only thing about me that might be used in the matter of identification. You will observe that there is no lettering, not even the jeweler's usual carat-mark to qualify the gold. I recall nothing; life

with me dates only from the wide plains and grazing cattle. I was born either in Germany or Austria. That's all I know. And to tell you the honest truth, boy, it's the reason I've placed my woman-ideal so high. So long as I place her over my head I'm not foolish enough to weaken into thinking I can have her. What woman wants a man without a name?"

"You poor old Dutchman, you! You can buy a genealogy with your income. And a woman nowadays marries the man, the man. It's only horses, dogs and cattle that we buy for their pedigrees. Come; you ought to have a strawberry mark on your arm," I suggested lightly; for there were times when Max brooded over the mystery which enveloped his birth.

In reply he rolled up his sleeve and bared a mighty arm. Where the vaccination scar usually is I saw a red patch, like a burn. I leaned over and examined it. It was a four-pointed scar, with a perfect circle around it. Somehow, it seemed to me that this was not the first time I had seen this peculiar mark. I did not recollect ever seeing it on Max's arm. Where had I seen it, then?

"It looks like a burn," I ventured to suggest.

"It is. I wish I knew what it signified. Scharfenstein said that it was positively fresh when he found me. He said I cried a good deal and kept telling him that I was Max. Maybe I'm an anarchist and don't know it," with half a smile.

"It's a curious scar. Hang me, but I've seen it somewhere before!" striking my forehead as if to stir a vivid recollection.

"You have?" eagerly. "Where, where?"

"I don't know; possibly I saw it on your arm in the old days."

He sank back in his chair. Silence, during which the smoke thickened and the pup whined softly in his sleep. Out upon the night the cathedral bell boomed the third hour of morning.

"If you don't mind, Artie," said

Max, yawning, "I'll turn in. I've been traveling some for the past fortnight."

"Take a ride on Dandy in the morning. He'll hold your weight nicely. I can't go with you, as I've a lame ankle."

"I'll be in the saddle at dawn. All I need is a couple of hours between sheets."

As I prodded my pillow into a comfortable wad under my cheek I wondered where I had seen that particular brand. It *was* a brand. I knew that I had seen it somewhere, but my memory danced away when I endeavored to halter it. Soon I fell asleep, dreaming of Somebody who wasn't Max Scharfenstein, not by a long shot.

V

THAT same evening the grand duke's valet knocked on the door leading into the princess's apartments, and when the door opened he gravely announced that his serene highness desired to speak to the Princess Hildegarde. It was a command. For some reason, known best to herself, the princess chose to obey it.

"Say that I shall be there presently," she said, dismissing the valet.

As she entered her uncle's study—so called because of its dust-laden bookshelves, though the duke sometimes disturbed them to steady the leg of some unbalanced chair or table—he laid down his pipe and dismissed his small company of card-players.

"I did not expect to see you so soon," he began. "A woman's curiosity sometimes has its value. It takes little to arouse it, but a great deal to allay it."

"You have not summoned me to make smart speeches, simply because I have been educated up to them?" truculently.

"No. I have not summoned you to talk 'smart,' a word much in evidence in Barscheit since your return from England. For once I am going to use a woman's prerogative. I have changed my mind."

The Princess Hildegarde trembled

with delight. She could put but one meaning to his words.

"The marriage will not take place next month."

"Uncle!" rapturously.

"Wait a moment," grimly. "It shall take place next week."

"I warn you not to force me to the altar!" cried the girl, trembling this time with a cold fury.

"My child, you are too young in spirit and too old in mind to be allowed a gateless pasture. In harness you will do very well." He took up his pipe and primed it. It *was* rather embarrassing to look the girl in the eye. "You shall wed Dopplekinn next week."

"You will find it rather embarrassing to drag me to the altar," evenly.

"You will not," he replied, "create a scandal of such magnitude. You are untamable, but you are proud."

The girl remained silent. In her heart she knew that he had spoken truly. She could never make a scene in the cathedral. But she was determined never to enter it. She wondered if she should produce the bogus certificate. She decided to wait and see whether there were no other loophole of escape. Old *Rotnasig*? Not if she died!

When these two talked without apparent heat it was with unalterable fixedness of purpose. They were of a common race. The duke was determined that she should wed Dopplekinn; she was equally determined that she would not. The gentleman with the algebraic bump may figure this out to suit himself.

"Have you no pity?"

"My reason overshadows it. You do not suppose that I take any especial pleasure in forcing you? But you leave me with no other method."

"I am a young girl, and he is an old man."

"That is immaterial. Besides, the fact has gone abroad. It is now irrevocable."

"I promise to go out and ask the first man I see to marry me!" she declared.

"Pray heaven it may be Dopplekinn!" said the duke drolly.

"Oh, do not doubt that I have the courage and the recklessness. I would not care if he were young, but the prince is old enough to be my father."

"You are not obliged to call him husband." The duke possessed a sparkle tonight which was unusual in him. Perhaps he had won some of the state moneys which he had paid out to his ministers that day. "Let us not waste any time," he added.

"I shall not waste any," ominously.

"Order your gown from Vienna, or Paris, or from wherever you will. Don't haggle over the price; let it be a good one; I'm willing to go deep for it."

"You loved my aunt once," a broken note in her voice.

"I love her still," not unkindly; "but I must have peace in the house. Observe what you have so far accomplished in the matter of creating turmoil." The duke took up a paper.

"My sins?" contemptuously.

"Let us call them your transgressions. Listen. You have ridden a horse as a man rides it; you have ridden bicycles in public streets; you have stolen away to a masked ball; you ran away from school in Paris and visited heaven knows whom; you have bribed sentries to let you in when you were out late; you have thrust aside the laws as if they meant nothing; you have trifled with the state papers and caused the body politic to break up a meeting as a consequence of the laughter."

The girl, as she recollected this day to which he referred, laughed long and joyously. He waited patiently till she had done, and I am not sure that his mouth did not twist under his beard.

"Foreign education is the cause of all this. Those cursed French and English schools have ruined you. And I was fool enough to send you to them. This is the end."

"Or the beginning," rebelliously.

"Dopplekinn is mild and kind."

"Mild and kind! One would think

that you were marrying me to a horse! Well, I shall not enter the cathedral."

"How shall you avoid it?" calmly.

"I shall find a way; wait and see."

"I shall wait." Then, with a sudden softening, for he loved the girl after his fashion: "I am growing old, my child. If I should die, what would become of you? I have no son; your Uncle Franz, who is but a year or two younger than I am, would reign, and he would not tolerate your madcap ways. You must marry at once. I love you in spite of your wilfulness. But you have shown yourself incapable of loving. Dopplekinn is wealthy. You shall marry him."

"I will run away, uncle," decidedly.

"I have notified the frontiers," tranquilly. "From now on you will be watched. It is the inevitable, my child, and even I have to bow to that."

She touched the paper in her bosom, but paused.

"Moreover, I have decided," went on the duke, "to send the Honorable Betty Moore back to England."

"Betty?"

"Yes. She is a charming young person, but she is altogether too sympathetic. She abets you in all you do. Her English independence does not conform with my ideas. After the wedding I shall notify her father."

"Everything, everything! My friends, my liberty, the right God gives to every woman—to love whom she will! And you, my uncle, rob me of these things! What if I should tell you that marriage with me is now impossible?" her lips growing thin.

"I should not be very much surprised."

"Please look at this, then, and you will understand why I cannot marry Dopplekinn." She thrust the bogus certificate into his hands.

The duke read it carefully, not a muscle in his face disturbed. Finally he looked up with a terrifying smile.

"Poor, foolish child! What a terrible thing this might have turned out to be!"

"What do you mean?"

"Mean? Do you suppose anything like this could take place without my hearing of it? And such a dishonest, unscrupulous rascal! Some day I shall thank the American consul personally for his part in the affair. I was waiting to see when you would produce this. You virtually placed your honor and reputation, which I know to be above reproach, into the keeping of a man who would sell his soul for a thousand crowns."

The girl felt her knees give way, and she sat down. Tears slowly welled up in her eyes and overflowed, blurring everything.

The duke got up and went over to his desk, rummaging among the papers. He returned to the girl with a letter.

"Read that, and learn the treachery of the man you trusted."

The letter was written by Steinbock. In it he disclosed all. It was a venomous, insulting letter. The girl crushed it in her hand.

"Is he dead?" she asked, all the bitterness in her heart surging to her lips.

"To Barscheit," briefly. "Now, what shall I do with this?" tapping the bogus certificate.

"Give it to me," said the girl wearily. She ripped it into halves, into quarters, into infinitesimal squares, and tossed them into the waste-basket. "I am the unhappiest girl in the world."

"I am sorry. It isn't as if I had forced Dopplekinn on you without first letting you have your choice. You have rejected the princes of a dozen wealthy countries. We are not as the common people; we cannot marry where we will. I shall announce that the marriage shall take place next week."

"Do not send my friend away," she pleaded, apparently tamed.

"I will promise to give the matter thought. Good night."

She turned away without a word and left him. When he roared at her she knew by experience that he was harmless; but this quiet determination meant the exclusion of any further argument. There was no escape unless she ran away. She wept on her pil-

low that night, not so much at the thought of wedding Dopplekinn as at the fact that Prince Charming had evidently missed the last train and was never coming to wake her up, or, if he did come, it would be when it was too late. How many times had she conjured him up, as she rode in the fresh fairness of the mornings! How manly he was and how his voice thrilled her! Her horse was suddenly to run away, he was to rescue her, and then demand her hand in marriage as a fitting reward. Sometimes he had black hair and eyes, but more often he was big and tall, with yellow hair and the bluest eyes in all the world.

VI

THE princess rose at dawn the following day. She routed out Hans, the head groom, and told him to saddle Artemis, the slim-limbed, seal-brown filly which an English nobleman had given to her. Ten minutes later she was in the saddle, and the heaviness on her heart seemed to rise and vanish like the opal mists on the bosom of the motionless lake. A pale star blinked at her, and the day, flushed like the cheek of a waking infant, began drowsily to creep over the rolling mountains. How silent all the city was! Only here and there above the chimneys rose a languid film of smoke. The gates of the park shut behind her with a clang, and so for a time she was alone and free. She touched Artemis with a spur, and the filly broke into a canter toward the lake road. The girl's nostrils dilated. Every flower, the thousand resinous saps of the forest, the earth itself, yielded up a cool sweet perfume that was to the mind what a glass of wine is to the blood; exhilaration.

Mottled with pink and gray and blue and gold, the ever-changing hues of the morning, the surface of the lake was as smooth as her mirror and, like it, always reflecting beauty. Fish leaped forth and fell with a sounding splash, and the circles would widen

and gradually vanish. A blackbird dipped among the silent rushes; a young fox barked importantly; a hawk flashed by. The mists swam hither and thither mysteriously, growing thinner and fainter as the gold of day grew brighter and clearer. Suddenly—in the words of the old tent-maker—the false morning died, and it was day.

I'm afraid that somewhere among the princess's ancestors there was a troubadour. For she was something of a poet. Indeed, I have already remarked that she wrote verses. The atmospheric change of the morning turned her mind into sentimental channels. How she envied the peasant woman, who might come and go at will, sleep in the open or in the hut, loving or hating with perfect freedom! Ah, Prince Charming, Prince Charming! where were you? Why did you loiter? Perhaps for her there *was* no Prince Charming. It might be so. She sighed.

She would never marry Dopplekinn—never. That horrible Steinbock! She was glad, glad that she had struck him, again and again, across his lying eyes and evil mouth. She had believed that she knew the world; it was all yet a mystery; the older she grew the less she understood. Wasn't anybody good? Was everybody to be distrusted? Which way should she turn now? The world was beautiful enough; it was the people in it. Poor Betty! She had her troubles, too; but somehow she refused to confide them. She acted very much as if she were in love.

She gazed at the hawk enviously. How proud and free he was, so high up there, circling and circling. Even the fox was freer than she; the forests were his, and he might go whither he listed. And the fish that leaped in frolic from the water, and the blackbird in the rushes! She could not understand.

She would never marry Dopplekinn—never.

But how should she escape—how? On Wednesday night she would be given her quarterly allowance of a thousand crowns, and on Thursday she must act. . . . Yes, yes, that

was it! How simple! She would slip over into Dopplekinn, where they never would think to search for her. She knew a place in which to hide. From Dopplekinn she would go straight to Dresden and seek the protection of her old governess, who would hide her till the duke came to his senses. If only she had an independent fortune, how she would snap her fingers at them all!

She was distracted by the sound of jangling steel. Artemis had cast a shoe. How annoying! It would take ten minutes to reach old Bauer's smithy, and ten minutes more to put on a shoe. She brought the filly down to a walk.

What was the use of being a princess if one was not allowed to act in a royal fashion? It wasn't so terrible to wear men's clothes, and besides they were very comfortable for riding a horse. And as for riding a bicycle in the public streets, hadn't that ugly Italian duchess ridden through the streets of Rome, and in knickerbockers, too? Nobody seemed to mind it there. But in Barscheit it had been little short of a crime. She recalled the flaming fagots and the red-hot wire of her unfortunate wheel. A smile rippled over her face, but it passed quickly. There was nothing left to smile over. They were going to force her to marry a tomb, a man in whom love and courage and joy were as dead things. Woe to Dopplekinn, though—woe to him! She would lead him a dance, wild and terrible.

If only she were Betty, free to do what she pleased, to go and come at will! She wasn't born to be a princess; she wasn't commonplace enough; she enjoyed life too well. Ah, if only she might live and act like those English cousins of hers with whom she went to school! *They* could ride man-fashion, hunt man-fashion, shoot, play cards and bet at the races man-fashion, and nobody threatened *them* with Dopplekinns. They might dance, too, till the sun came into the windows and the rouge on their faces cracked. But *she!* (I use the italics because it is as

near as I can illustrate the decided nods of her pretty head.) Why, every sweet had to be stolen!

She would never marry Dopplekinn—never. She would never watch his old nose grow purple at the table. She would run away. And since Prince Charming was nowhere to be seen, it was better to die an old maid.

Presently the smithy came into view, emerging from a cluster of poplars. She rode up to the doors, dismounted and entered. Old Bauer himself was at the bellows, and the weird blue light hissing up from the blown coals discovered another customer. She turned and met his frank glance of admiration. (If she hadn't turned! If his admiration hadn't been entirely frank!) Instantly she sent Bauer a warning glance which that old worthy seemed immediately to understand. The stranger was tall, well made, handsome, with yellow hair, and eyes as blue as the sky is when the west wind blows.

He raised his cap, and the heart of the girl fluttered. Wherever had this seemingly fellow come from?

"Good morning," said the stranger courteously. "I see that you have had the same misfortune as myself."

"You have lost a shoe? Rather annoying, when one doesn't want a single break in the going." She uttered the words carelessly, as if she weren't at all interested.

The stranger stuffed his cap into a pocket.

She was glad that she had chosen the new saddle. The crest and coat of arms had not yet been burned upon the leather nor engraved upon the silver ornaments, and there was no blanket under the English saddle. There might be an adventure; one could not always tell. She must hide her identity. If the stranger knew that she belonged to the house of Barscheit, possibly he would be frightened and take to his heels.

But the Princess Hildegardie did not know that this stranger never took to his heels; he wasn't that kind. Princess or peasant, it would have been all

the same to him. Only his tone might have lost half a key.

Bauer called to his assistant, and the girl stepped out into the road. The stranger followed, as she knew he would. It will be seen that she knew something of men, if only that they possessed curiosity.

"What a beautiful place this is!" the stranger ventured, waving his hand toward the still lake and the silent, misty mountains.

"There is no place quite like it," she admitted. "You are a stranger in Barscheit?" politely. He was young and certainly the best looking man she had seen in a month of moons. If Dopplekinn, now, were only more after this pattern!

"Yes, this is my first trip to Barscheit." He had a very engaging smile.

"You are from Vienna?"

"No."

"Ah, from Berlin. I was not quite sure of the accent."

"I am a German-American," frankly. "I have always spoken the language as if it were my own, which doubtless it is."

"America!" she cried, her interest genuinely aroused. "That is the country where everyone does just as he pleases."

"Sometimes." (What beautiful teeth she had, white as skimmed milk!)

"They are free?"

"Nearly always."

"They tell me that women there are all queens."

"We are there, or here, always your humble servants."

He was evidently a gentleman; there was something in his bow that was courtly. "And do the women attend the theatres alone at night?"

"If they desire to."

"Tell me, does the daughter of a President have just as much liberty as her subjects?"

"Even more. Only, there are no subjects in America."

"No subjects? What do they call them, then?"

"Voters."

"And do the women vote?"

"Only at the women's clubs."

She did not quite get this; not that it was too subtle, rather that it was not within her comprehension.

"It is a big country?"

"Ever so big."

"Do you like it?"

"I love every inch of it. I have even fought for it."

"In the Spanish War?" visibly excited.

"Yes."

"Were you a major or a colonel?"

"Neither; only a private."

"I thought every soldier there was either a colonel or a major."

He looked at her sharply, but her eye was roving. He became suspicious. She might be simple, and then again she mightn't. She was worth studying, anyhow.

"I was a cavalryman, with nothing to do but obey orders and, when ordered, fight. I am visiting the American consul here; he was a schoolmate of mine."

"Ah! I believed that I recognized the horse."

"You know him?" quickly.

"Oh," casually, "everyone hereabouts has seen the consul on his morning rides. He rides like a centaur, they say; but I have never seen a centaur."

The stranger laughed. She was charming.

"He ought to ride well; I taught him." But the gay smile which followed this statement robbed it of its air of conceit. "You see, I have ridden part of my life on the great plains of the West, and have mounted everything from a wild Indian pony to an English thoroughbred. My name is Max Scharfenstein, and I am here as a medical student, though in my own country I have the right to hang out a physician's shingle."

She drew aimless figures in the dust with her riding-crop. There was no sense in her giving any name. Probably they might never meet again. And yet.

"I am Hildegard von—von Heidehoff," giving her mother's name. He was too nice to frighten away.

The hesitance over the "von" did not strike his usually keen ear. He was too intent on noting the variant expressions on her exquisite face. It was a pity she was dark. What a figure, and how proudly the head rested upon the slender but firm white throat! After all, black eyes, such as these were, might easily rival any blue eyes he had ever seen. (Which goes to prove that a man's ideals are not built as solidly as might be.)

"It is rather unusual," he said, "to see a woman ride so early; but you have the right idea. Everything begins to wake—life, the air, the day. There is something in the dew of the morning that is a better tonic than any doctor can brew."

"Take care; if you have no confidence in your wares, you must not expect it of your patients."

"Oh, I am a doctor of philosophy also."

"That is to say," she observed, "if you lose your patients, you will accept their loss without a murmur? Very good. May I ask what you have come this far to study?"

"Nerves."

"Is it possible!" with a smile as fleet as the wind.

He laughed. This was almost like any American girl. How easy it was to talk to her! He tried again to catch her eye, but failed. Then both looked out over the lake, mutually agreeable that a pause should ensue. He did not mind the dark hair at all.

"Do you speak English?" she asked abruptly in that tongue, with a full glance to note the effect.

"English is spoken to some extent in the United States," he answered gravely. He did not evince the least surprise at her fluency. Somehow he rather expected it of her.

"Do you write to the humorous papers in your country?"

"Only to subscribe for them," said he.

And again they laughed; which was a very good sign that things were going forward tolerably well.

And then the miserable fellow of a

smith had to come out and announce that the stranger's horse was ready.

"I'll warrant the shoe," said Bauer.

"You haven't lost any time," said Max, his regret evident to everyone.

The girl smiled approvingly. She loved humor in a man, and this one with the yellow hair and blue eyes seemed to possess a fund of the dry sort. All this was very wrong, she knew, but she wasn't going to be the princess this morning; she was going to cast off the shell of artificiality, of etiquette.

"How much will this shoe cost me?" Max asked.

"Half a crown," said Bauer, with a sly glance at the girl to see how she would recognize so exorbitant a sum. The princess frowned. "But sometimes," added Bauer hurriedly, "I do it for nothing."

"Bauer, your grandfather was a robber," the girl laughed. "Take heed that you do not follow his footsteps."

"I am a poor man, your—m-m—fräulein," he stammered.

"Here's a crown," said Max, tossing a coin which was neatly caught by the grimy hand of the smith.

"Are you very rich?" asked the girl curiously.

"Why?" counter-questioned Max.

"Oh, I am curious to know. Bauer will tell it to everyone in Barscheit that you over-pay for things, and from now on you will have to figure living on a basis of crowns."

It was worth any price to hear a pretty woman laugh. What a fine beginning for a day!

"May misfortune be kind enough to bring you this way again, Herr!" Bauer cried joyfully, not to say ambiguously.

"Listen to that!" laughed the girl, her eyes shining like the water in the sun. "But he means only to thank your generosity. Now," with a severe frown, "how much do I owe you? Take care; I've only a few pieces of silver in my purse."

"Why, fräulein, you owe me nothing; I am even in debt to you for this very crown." Which proved that

Bauer had had his lesson in courtiership.

The assistant soon brought forth the girl's restive filly. Max sprang to her aid. How light her foot was in his palm! (She could easily have mounted alone, such was her skill; but there's the woman of it.)

"I am going toward the Pass," she said, reading the half-veiled appeal in his blue eyes.

"Which way is that?" he asked, swinging into his own saddle.

"That way," nodding toward the south. After all, there could be no harm; in two or three days their paths would separate forever.

"Why," delightedly, "I am going that way myself."

Old Bauer watched them till they disappeared around a turn in the road. He returned to his forge, shaking his head as if confronted by a problem too abstruse even for his German mind.

"Well, he's an American, so I will not waste any pity on him. The pity is that she must wed old Red-nosed."

It would have been if she had!

So the princess and Prince Charming rode into the country, and they talked about a thousand and one things. Had she ever been to France? Yes. To England? She had received part of her education there. Did she know the Princess Hildegard? Slightly. What was she like? She was a madcap, irresponsible, but very much abused. Did she know Mr. Warrington, the American consul? She had seen him on his morning rides. Wasn't it a fine world? It was, indeed.

Once they stopped at a farm. The girl refused to dismount, bidding Max go in and ask for a drink of milk. Max obeyed with alacrity, returning with two foaming goblets of warm milk.

From time to time the princess stifled the "small voice." It was wrong, and yet it wasn't. What worried her was the thought that Betty might take it into her head to up and follow, and then everything would be spoiled. Every now and then she

turned her head and sighed contentedly; the road to rearward was always clear.

"Follow me!" she cried suddenly, even daringly.

A stone wall, three feet high, ran along at their right. The foreground was hard and firm. Pressing the reins on the filly's withers, she made straight for the wall, cleared it, and drew up on the other side. Now, Max hadn't the least idea that the horse under him was a hunter, so I might very well say that he took his life in his hands as he followed her. But Dandy knew his business. He took the wall without effort. A warm glow went over Max when he found that he hadn't broken his neck. Together they galloped down the field and came back for the return jump. This, too, was made easily. Max's admiration knew no bounds. It was a dangerous pastime in more ways than one.

At eight o'clock they turned toward home, talking about another thousand and one things.

"It has been a delightful ride," suggested Max, with an eye to the future.

"I take this road nearly every morning," said she, looking out upon the water, which was ruffling itself and quarreling along the sandy shores.

Max said nothing, but he at once made up his mind that he would take the same road, provided he could in any reasonable manner get rid of me.

"Did you enjoy the ride?" asked the Honorable Betty as her highness came in to breakfast. There were no formalities in the princess's apartments.

"Beautifully!" Her highness guiltily wondered whether there were any logical way to keep Betty in the house for the next few mornings. She sat down and sipped her tea. "The duke talked to me last night. Steinbock played doubles."

"What!"

"Yes. He sold us to the duke, who patiently waited for me to speak.

Betty, I am a fool. But I shall never marry Dopppekinn. That is settled."

"I suppose he will be inviting me to return to England," said Betty shrewdly.

"Not for the present."

"And I have just grown to love the place," pathetically. "Mr. Warrington has asked me to ride with him afternoons. His ankle prevents him from taking the long morning jaunts. If it will not interfere with your plans, dear. . . ."

"Accept, by all means," interrupted her highness. "He is a capital horseman." She smiled mysteriously. Happily her companion was absorbed in thought and did not see this smile.

Max came in at quarter of ten, went to tub, and came down in time for the eggs.

"Have a good ride?" I asked.

"Bully! Beautiful country!"

"How these healthy animals eat!" I thought as I observed him occasionally.

"Wish I could go with you," I said, but half-heartedly.

"I'll get the lay of the land quick enough," he replied.

The rascal! Not a word about the girl that morning, nor the next, nor until Thursday morning. If only I had known! But Fate knows her business better than I do, and she was handling the affair. But long rides of a morning with a pretty girl are not safe for any bachelor.

Thursday morning he came in late. He dropped something on the table. On inspection I found it to be a woman's handkerchief purse.

"Where the deuce did you get that?" I asked, mighty curious.

"By George! but I've been enjoying the most enchanting adventure; such as you read out of a book. I'm inclined to believe that I shall enjoy my studies in old Barscheit."

"But where did you get this?" If there was a girl around, I wanted to know all about it.

"She dropped it."

"She dropped it!" I repeated.

"What she? Why, you old tow-head, have you been flirting at this hour of the morning?"

"Handsome as a picture!"

"Ha! the ideal at last," ironically.

"Blond, of course."

"Dark as a Spaniard, and rides like Diana." His enthusiasm was not to be lightly passed over.

"Never heard of Diana riding," said I; "always saw her pictured as going it afoot."

"Don't be an ass! You know very well what I mean."

"I've no argument to offer, nor any picture to prove my case. You've had an adventure; give it up, every bit of it."

"One of the finest horsewomen I ever saw. Took a wall three feet high the other morning, just to see if I dared follow. Lucky Dandy is a hunter or I'd have broken my neck."

"Very interesting." Then of a sudden a thought flashed through my head and out again. "Anybody with her?"

"Only myself these three mornings."

"H'm! Did you get as far as names?"

"Yes; I told her mine. Who is Hildegarde von Heideloff?"

"Heideloff?" I was puzzled. My suspicions evaporated. "I can't say that I know anyone by that name. Sure it was Heideloff?"

"Do you mean to tell me," with blank astonishment, "that there is a petticoat on horseback in this duchy that you do not know?"

"I don't know any woman by the name of Hildegarde von Heideloff; on my word of honor, Max, I don't."

"Old Bauer, the blacksmith, knew her."

Bauer? All my suspicions returned. "Describe the girl to me."

"Handsome figure, masses of black hair, great black eyes that are full of good fun, a delicate nose, and, I might add, a very kissable mouth."

"What! have you kissed her?" I exclaimed.

"No, no! Only I'd like to."

"H'm! You've made quite a study. She must be visiting someone nearby. There is an old castle three miles west of the smithy. Did she speak English?"

"Yes," excitedly.

"That accounts for it. An old English nobleman lives over there during the summer months, and it is not improbable that she is one of his guests." In my heart I knew that her highness was up to some of her tricks again, and there was no need of her shattering good old Max's heart. But I felt bound to say: "Why not look into the purse? There might be something there to prove her identity."

"Look into her purse?" horrified. "You wouldn't have me peeking into a woman's purse, would you? Suppose there should be a box of rouge? Her cheeks were red."

"Quite likely."

"Or a powder-puff."

"Even more likely."

"Or . . ."

"Go on."

"Or a love letter."

"I have my doubts," said I.

"Well, if you do not know who she is, I'll find out," undismayed.

Doubtless he would; he was a persistent old beggar was Max.

"Do not let it get serious, my boy," I warned. "You could not marry anyone in this country."

"Why not?"

"Have you been regularly baptized? Was your father? Was your grandfather? Unless you can answer these simplest of questions and prove them, you could not get a license; and no priest or preacher would dare marry you without a license."

"Hang you, who's talking about getting married? All I want to know is, who is Hildegarde von Heideloff, and how am I to return her purse? I shall ask the blacksmith."

"Do so," taking up my egg-spoon.

Max slipped the purse into his breast-pocket and sat down.

And now permit me to tell you how Max returned the purse to the Princess Hildegarde of Barscheit, and how the

princess eloped with the said Max Scharfenstein of nowhere in particular.

VII

"THE one fault I have to find with European life is the poor quality of tobacco used."

It was eight o'clock, Thursday night, the night of the dinner at Muller's. I was dressing when Max entered, with a miserable cheroot between his teeth.

"They say," he went on, "that in Russia they drink the finest tea in the world, simply because it is brought overland and not by sea. Unfortunately, tobacco—we Americans recognize no leaf as tobacco unless it comes from Cuba—has to cross the sea, and is, in some unaccountable manner, weakened in the transit. There are worse cigars in Germany than in France, and I wouldn't have believed it possible if I had not gone to the trouble of proving it. Fine country! For a week I've been trying to smoke the German quality of the weed, as a preventive, but I see I must give it up on account of my throat. My boy, I have news for you," tossing the cheroot into the grate.

"Fire away," said I, struggling with a collar.

"I have a box of Habanas over at the custom house that I forgot to bail out."

"No!" said I joyfully. A Habana, and one of Scharfenstein's!

"I've an idea that they would go well with the dinner. So, if you don't mind, I'll trot over and get 'em."

"Be sure and get around to Muller's at half-past eight, then," said I.

"I'll be there"; for he knew where to find the place.

Muller's rathskeller was the rendezvous of students, officers and all those persons of quality who liked music with their meat. The place was low-ceilinged, but roomy, and the ventilation was excellent, considering. The smoke never got so thick that one couldn't see the way to the door when

the students started in "to clean up the place," to use the happy idiom of mine own country. There were marble tables and floors and arches and light, cane-bottomed chairs from Köln. It was at once bohemian and cosmopolitan, and, once inside, it was easy to imagine oneself in Vienna. A Hungarian orchestra occupied an inclosed platform, and every night the wail of the violin and the pom-pom of the wool-tipped hammers on the Hungarian "piano" might be heard. It was essentially a man's place of entertainment; few women ever had the courage or the inclination to enter. In America it would have been the fashion; but in the capital of Barscheit the women ate in the restaurant above, which was attached to the hotel, and depended upon the Volksgarten band for their evening's diversion.

You had to order your table hours ahead—that is, if you were a civilian. If you were lucky enough to be an officer, you were privileged to take any vacant chair you saw. But heaven aid you if you attempted to do this not being an officer. In Barscheit there were also many unwritten laws, and you must observe these with all the fidelity and attention that you give to the enameled signs. Only the military had the right to request the orchestra to repeat a piece of music. Sometimes the lieutenants, seized with that gay humor known only to cubs, would force the orchestra in Muller's to play the Hungarian war-song till the ears cried out in pain. This was always the case when any Austrians happened to be present. But ordinarily the crowds were good-natured, boisterous, but orderly.

It was here, then, that I had arranged to give my little dinner. The orchestra had agreed—for a liberal tip—to play "The Star-Spangled Banner," and there was a case of Dopplekinn's sparkling Moselle. I may as well state right here that we neither heard our national anthem nor drank the vintage. You will soon learn why. I can laugh now, I can treat the whole affair with becoming levity, but at

the time I gained several new gray hairs.

If the princess hadn't turned around, and if Max hadn't wanted that box of Habanas!

When I arrived at Muller's I found my boys in a merry mood. They were singing softly from the opera "Robin Hood" and with fine college harmony, and as I entered they swarmed about me like so many young dogs. Truth to tell, none of them was under twenty, and two or three were older than myself. But to them I represented official protection for whatever they might do. I assumed all the dignity I dared. I had kept Scharfenstein's name back as a surprise.

Ellis—for whom I had the passports—immediately struck me as being so nearly like Max that they might easily have been brothers. Ellis was slighter, that was all the difference. I gave him his papers and examined his tickets. Everything was well; barring railroad accidents, he would be in Dresden the following day.

"You go through Dopplekinn, then?" said I.

"Yes. I have friends in Dresden whom I wish to see before going home."

"Well, good luck to you."

Then I announced that Max Scharfenstein, an old college comrade, would join us presently. This was greeted with hurrahs. At that time there wasn't an American student who did not recollect Max's great run from the ten-yard line. (But where the deuce was Max?) I took a little flag from my pocket and stuck it into the vase of poppies, and the boys clapped their hands. You never realize how beautiful your flag is till you see it in a foreign land. I apologized for Max's absence, explaining the cause, and ordered dinner to be served. We hadn't much time, as Ellis's train departed at ten. It was now a quarter to nine.

We had come to the relishes when a party of four officers took the table nearest us. They hung up their sabers

on the wall-pegs, and sat down, ordering a bottle of light wine. Usually there were five chairs to the table, but even if only two were being used no one had the right to withdraw one of the vacant chairs without the most elaborate apologies. This is the law of courtesy in Barscheit. In America it is different; if you see anything you want, take it.

Presently one of the officers—I knew none of them save by sight—rose and approached. He touched the flag insolently and inquired what right it had in a public restaurant in Barscheit. Ordinarily his question would not have been put without some justification. But he knew very well who I was and what my rights were in this instance.

"Herr Lieutenant," said I coldly, though my cheeks were warm enough, "I represent that flag in this country, and I am accredited with certain privileges, as doubtless you are aware. You will do me the courtesy of returning to your own table." I bowed.

He glared at me for a brief period, then turned on his heel. This was the first act in the play. At the fellow's table sat Lieutenant von Stoerer, Dopplekinn's nephew and heir-presumptive. He was, to speak plainly, a rake, a spendthrift and wholly untrustworthy. He was not ill-looking, however.

My spirits floated between anger and the fear that the officers might eventually ruin the dinner. Which they eventually did.

Things went on smoothly for a time. The orchestra was pom-pomming the popular airs from "Faust." (Where the deuce was that tow-headed Dutchman?) Laughter rose and fell; the clinkle of glass was heard; voices called. And then Max came in, looking as cool as you please, though I could read by his heaving chest that he had been sprinting up back streets. The boys crowded around him, and there was much ado over the laggard.

Unfortunately the waiter had forgotten to bring a chair for his plate. With a genial smile on his face, Max

innocently stepped over to the officers' table and plucked forth the vacant chair. For a wonder the officers appeared to give this action no heed, and I was secretly gratified. It was something to be a consul, after all. But I counted my chickens too early.

"Where are the cigars?" I asked as Max sat down complacently.

"Cigars?" blankly. "Hang me, I've clean forgotten them!" And then, perfectly oblivious of the probable storm that was at that moment gathering for a downpour over his luckless head, he told us the reason of his delay.

"There was a crowd around the palace," he began. "It seems that the Princess Hildegard has run away, and they believe that she has ridden toward the Pass in a closed carriage. The police are at this very moment scouring the country in that direction. She has eloped."

"Eloped?" we all cried, being more or less familiar with the state of affairs at the palace.

"Good-bye to Dopplekinn's *Frau*!"

"Good girl!"

"She has been missing since seven o'clock, when she drove away on the pretense of visiting her father's old steward, who is ill," went on Max, feeling the importance of his news. "They traced her there. From the steward's the carriage was driven south, and that's the last seen of her. There won't be any wedding at the cathedral next Tuesday," laughing.

Queries and answers were going crisscross over the table, when I observed with dread that Lieutenant von Storer had risen and was coming our way. He stopped at Max's side. Max looked up to receive von Storer's glove full on the cheek. It was no gentle stroke. Von Storer at once returned to his table and sat down.

For a moment we were all absolutely without power of motion or of speech. Max's face grew as white as the tablecloth, and the print of the glove glowed redly against the white. I was horrified, for I knew his tremendous strength. If he showed fight, von

Storer would calmly saber him. It was the custom. But Max surprised me. He was the coolest among us, but of that quality of coolness which did not reassure me. He took up his story where he had left off and finished it. For his remarkable control I could have taken him in my arms and hugged him.

The officers scowled, while von Storer bit his mustache nervously. The American had ignored his insult. Presently he rose again and approached. He thrust a card under Max's nose.

"Can you understand that?" he asked contemptuously.

Max took the card, ripped it into quarters and dropped these to the floor. Then, to my terror and the terror of those with me, he tranquilly pulled out a murderous-looking Colt and laid it beside his plate. He went on talking, but none of us heard a word he said. We were fearfully waiting to see him kill someone or be killed.

No one was killed. The officers hurriedly took down their sabers and made a bee-line for the door of which I have spoken.

Max returned the revolver to his hip-pocket and gave vent to a Homeric laugh.

"You tow-headed Dutchman!" I cried, when I found voice for my words, "what have you done?"

"Done? Why, it looks as if we had all the downs this half," he replied smartly. "Oh, the gun isn't loaded," confidentially.

Ellis fumbled in his pockets and produced his passports and tickets. These he shoved over to Max.

"What's this for?" Max asked curiously.

"Ellis," said I, "it is very good of you. Max, take those. Mr. Ellis wishes to save your hide. Take them and get to the station as quickly as you can. And for the love of mercy, do not turn around till you're over in Dopplekinn's vineyards."

"Well, I'm hanged if I understand!" he cried. "I'm a peaceful man. A beggar walks up to me and slaps me in the face for nothing at all, and now

I must hike, eh? What the devil have I done now?"

Then, as briefly as I could, I explained the enormity of his offenses. To take a chair from a table, as he had done, was a gross insult; to receive a slap in the face and not to resent it, was another insult; to tear up an opponent's visiting-card, still another; to take out a revolver in Barscheit, unless you were an officer or had a permit, was worse than an insult, it was a crime, punishable by long imprisonment. They could accuse him of being either an anarchist or a socialist-red, coming to Barscheit with the intent to kill the grand duke. The fact that he was ignorant of the laws, or that he was an alien, would remit not one particle of his punishment and fine; and weeks would pass ere the matter could be arranged between the United States and Barscheit.

"Good Lord!" he gasped; "why didn't you tell me?"

"Why didn't you tell me that you carried a cannon in your pocket? Take Ellis's papers, otherwise you stand pat for a heap of trouble, and I can't help you. Go straight to Dresden, telegraph me, and I'll forward your luggage."

"But I came here to study!" Max argued doggedly.

"It will be geology in the form of prison walls," said Ellis quietly. "Don't be foolish, Mr. Scharfenstein; it is not a matter of a man's courage, but of his common sense. Take the tickets and light out. I have lived here for three years, and have seen men killed outright for less than you have done."

"But you don't expect me to leave this place without punching that beggar's head?" indignantly. "What do you think I'm made of?"

"You'll never get the chance to punch his head," said I. "We are wasting valuable time. Those officers have gone for the police. You have about twenty minutes to make the train. Come, for heaven's sake, come!"

He finally got it into his head that we knew what we were talking about.

How we got him to the station I do not remember, but somehow we got him there. He sputtered and fumed and swore as all brave men will who feel that they are running away in a cowardly fashion. He wasn't convinced, but he thanked Ellis for his kindness and hoped that *he* wouldn't get into trouble on his (Max's) account.

"Go straight to Dresden; say you've been studying medicine in Barscheit for three years; refer to me by telegraph if there is any question as to your new identity," said I. "You're the only man in the world, Max, that I'd lie for."

He stumbled through the gates, and we saw him open the door of a carriage just as the train began to pull out. A guard tried to stop him, but he was not quite quick enough. We watched the train till it melted away into the blackness beyond the terminus covering; then we, I and my fellow-diners, went soberly into the street. Here was a howdy-do! Suddenly Ellis let out a sounding laugh, and, scarcely knowing why, we joined him. It *was* funny, very funny, for everyone but poor old Max! The American spirit is based on the sense of humor, and even in tragic moments is irrepressible.

We did not return to Muller's; each of us stole quietly home to await the advent of the police, for they would rout out every American in town in their search for the man with the gun. They would first visit the consulate and ascertain what I knew of the affair; when they got through with the rest of the boys Max would be in Doppelkinn. The police were going to be very busy that night: a princess on one hand and an anarchist on the other.

There were terrible times, too, in the palace. Long before we watched Max's train and the vanishing green and red lights at the end of it the grand duke was having troubles of his own. He was pacing wildly up and down in his dressing-room. Clutched in his fist was a crumpled sheet of paper. From time to time he smoothed it out and re-read the contents. Each time he

swore like the celebrated man in Flinders.

"You forced me and I warned you that I should do something desperate. Do not send for me, for you will never find me till you come to your senses. I have eloped."

HILDEGARDE.

VIII

SHORTLY before six o'clock—dinner in the palace was rarely served until half-after eight—the Honorable Betty sat down to her writing-desk in her boudoir, which opened directly into that belonging to the princess, to write a few letters home. There was to be given a dinner to the state officials that night, and she knew from experience that after that solemn event was concluded it would be too late for the departing mails. She seemed to have no difficulty in composing her thoughts and transposing them to paper. There were times when she would lean back, nibble the end of her pen and smile in a dreamy, retrospective fashion. No doubt her thoughts were pleasant and agreeable.

She had completed addressing three envelopes, when she heard the door leading into the princess's boudoir open and close. She turned to behold the princess herself.

"Why, Gretchen, where are you going?" noting the gray walking-dress, the gray hat, the sensible, square-toed shoes.

"I am going to visit a sick nurse," replied her highness, avoiding the other's eye.

"But will you have time to dress for dinner?"

"That depends. Besides, the official dinners are a great bore." Her highness came forward, caught the dark head of the English girl between her gloved hands, pressed it against her heart, bent and kissed it. "What a lovely girl you are, Betty; always unruffled, always even-tempered. You will grow old very gracefully."

"I hope so; but I do not want to grow old at all. Can't I go with you?" eagerly.

"Impossible; etiquette demands

your presence here tonight. If I am late my rank will be my excuse, and my errand. What jolly times we used to have in that quaint old boarding-school in St. John's Wood. Do you remember how we went to your noble father's country place one Christmas? I went incognita. There was a children's party, and two boys had a fisticuff over you. Nobody noticed me those days. I was happy then." The princess frowned. It might have been the sign of repression of tears. Betty, with her head against the other's bosom, could not see. "I shall be lonely without you; for you cannot stay on here forever. If you could, it would be different. I shall miss you. Somehow you possess the faculty of calming me. I am so easily stirred into a passion; my temper is so surface-wise. Some day, however, I shall come to England and spend a whole month with you. Will not that be fine?"

"How melancholy your voice is!" cried Betty, trying to remove her highness's hands.

"No, no; I want to hold you just so. Perhaps I am sentimental tonight. I have all the moods, agreeable and disagreeable. . . . Do you love anybody?"

"Love anybody? What do you mean?" rising in spite of the protesting hands. "Do I look as if I were in love with anybody?"

They searched each other's eyes.

"Oh, you Islanders! Nothing can fathom what is going on in your hearts. You never make any mistakes; you always seem to know which paths to pursue; you are always right, always, always. I'd like to see you commit a folly, Betty; it's a wicked wish, I know, but I honestly wish it. There is certainly more Spanish blood in my veins than German. I am always making mistakes; I never know which path is the right one; I am always wrong. Do you believe it possible for a woman of birth and breeding to fall in love with a man whom she has known only three days?"

"Three days! Are you crazy, Hildegard?"

"Call me Gretchen!" imperiously.

"Gretchen, what has come over you?"

"I asked you a question."

"Well," a bit of color stealing into her cheeks, "it is possible, but very foolish. One ought to know something of a man's character," went on Betty, "before permitting sentiment to enter into one's thoughts."

"That is my own opinion, wise little white owl." Her highness took her friend in her arms and kissed her, held her at arm's length, drew her to her heart and again kissed her. It was like a farewell. Then she let her go. "If there is anything you need, make yourself at home with my cases." And her highness was gone.

Betty gazed at the door through which dear Gretchen had passed, gazed thoughtfully and anxiously.

"How oddly she acted! I wonder . . ." She made as though to run to the door, but stopped, as if ashamed of the doubt which flashed into her mind and out again.

The little clock on the mantel chimed forth the seventh hour, and she rang for her maid. It was time that she began dressing.

(Thus, for the present, I shall leave her. There are several reasons why my imagination should take this step; for, what should I know of a woman's toilet, save in the general mysterious results? However, I feel at liberty to steal into the duke's dressing-room. Here, while I am not positive what happened, here at least I can easily bring my imagination to bear upon the picture.)

The duke was rather pleased with himself. He liked to put on his state uniform, with its blue-gray frock, the white doeskin trousers which strapped under the patent-leather boots, the gold braid, the silver saber and the little rope of medals strung across his full, broad breast. It was thus he created awe; it was thus he became truly the sovereign, urbane and majestic.

His valet was in the act of buckling on the saber belt, when there came a respectful tap on the door.

"Enter," said the duke, frowning. One cannot assert any particular degree of dignity with a valet at one's side.

But it was only a corridor attendant who entered. He approached the duke's valet and presented a letter.

"For his serene highness." He bowed and backed out, closing the door gently.

At once the valet bowed also and extended the letter to his master. Formality is a fine thing in a palace.

"Ah, a letter," mused the duke, profoundly innocent of the viper which was about to sting him. "My glasses, Gustav; my eyeglasses!"

The valet hurried to the dresser and returned with the duke's state eyeglasses. These the duke perched deliberately upon the end of his noble nose. He opened the letter and read its contents. The valet, watching him slyly, saw him grow pale, then red, and finally purple; wrath has its rainbow. His hands shook, the glasses slipped from his palpitating nose. And I grieve to relate that his serene highness swore something marvelous to hear.

"Damnation!" he said, or some such word. "The little fool!" Then, suddenly remembering his dignity and the phrase that no man is a hero to his valet, he pointed to his glasses, at the same time returning the letter to its envelope, this letter which had caused this momentary perturbation. "Call the minister of police. You will find him in the smoking-room off the conservatory. Make all haste!"

The valet flew out of the door, while the duke began pacing up and down the room, muttering and growling, and balling his fists, and jingling his shining medals. He kicked over an inoffensive hassock and his favorite hound, and I don't know how many long-winded German oaths he let go. (It's a mighty hard language to swear in, especially when a man's under high pressure.)

"The silly little fool! And on a night like this! Curse it! This is what comes of mixing Spanish blood with German,

of letting her aunt's wishes overrule mine in the matter of education. But she shall be brought back, even if I have to ask the assistance of every sovereign in Europe. This is the end. And I had planned such a pleasant evening at cards!" The duke was not wholly unselfish.

In less than ten minutes' time the valet returned with the minister of police. The duke immediately dismissed the valet.

"Your serene highness sent for me?" asked the minister, shaking in his boots. There had been four ministers of police in three years.

"Yes. Read this."

The minister took the letter. He read it with bulging eyes. "Good heavens, it must be one of her highness's jokes!"

"It will be a sorry joke for you if she crosses any of the frontiers."

"But . . ."

"But!" roared the duke. "Don't you dare bring up that word scandal! Seek her. Turn everybody out, the army, the police, everybody. When you locate her, telegraph, and have a special engine awaiting me at the station. And if you play a poor game of cards tonight I'll take away your portfolio. Remember, if she passes the frontier, off goes your official head!"

"And the fellow, who is he?"

"The good Lord only knows! That girl! . . . Witness these gray hairs. Put the rascal in irons; I'll attend to his case when I arrive. . . . Where is Steinbock?" he asked suddenly.

"He was arrested this morning in Berlin; I have already applied for his extradition."

"Good! Now, be off with you. Leave no stone unturned. The expense is nothing; I will gladly pay it out of my private purse."

"I'll find her," said the minister grimly. His portfolio hung in the balance.

All at once the duke struck his hands together jubilantly.

"What is it?" asked the minister. "A clue?"

"Nothing, nothing! Begone; you are wasting time."

The minister of police dashed out of the room as if pursued by a thousand devils. He knew the duke's mood; it was not one to cross or irritate. No sooner was he gone than the duke left his apartments and sought those of his niece. It *might* be a joke; it would do no harm to find out positively. But the beautiful suite was empty; even her highness's maid was gone. He then knocked on the door which led into Betty's boudoir, not very gently either.

"Open!" he bellowed.

"Who is it?" demanded a maid's frightened voice.

"The duke! Open instantly!"

"It is quite impossible," said another voice from within. It was calm and firm. "I am dressing."

"I must see you this instant. Open or I shall force the door!"

"Is your serene highness mad?"

"Will you open this door?"

"You command it?"

"A hundred times yes!"

"Since you command it." The voice was no longer calm; it was sharp and angry.

The wait seemed an hour to his serene highness, serene no longer. At length the bolt slipped, and the irate duke shouldered his way in. The tableau which met his gaze embarrassed him for a space. He was even ashamed. The Honorable Betty stood behind a tall-backed chair, an opera cloak thrown hastily over her bare shoulders. Her hair was partly down. A beautiful woman in a rage is a fascinating sight. The duke stared at her irresolutely.

"Will your highness explain this extraordinary intrusion?" she demanded. "You have literally forced your way into my room while I am dressing. It is utterly outside my understanding."

"I am old enough to be your father."

"That is the weakest excuse you could give me. At your age one's blood ought to be cooled to a certain discretion. My father, if he had had anything important to say, would have remained on the other side of the door."

I am not deaf. Your explanation is in order."

The duke had never been talked to so plainly in all his life. For awhile he was without voice, but plenty of color. "It is easily explained," he finally bawled out to her. "Her highness has eloped!"

The girl stared at him with wide eyes. "Eloped?" she breathed faintly. "Yes, eloped."

Betty wondered whether she heard aright, or if the duke were mad and out of his mind; and then she recollected her conversation with the princess. Her mouth opened as if to speak, but instead she closed her lips tightly. That wilful girl; whatever would become of her!

"Give this letter to your mistress," said the duke to the maid. "I will station myself in the window while she reads it."

He strode over to the window and drew the curtains about him. Below the night crowds were wandering about the streets; the band was playing in the Volksgarten; carriages were rolling to and from the opera; the fountain in the centre of the square sparkled merrily in the glare of the arc lights. But the duke saw none of these things. Rather he saw the telegraphic despatches flying to the four ends of the globe, telling the peoples that he, the Grand Duke of Barscheit, had been outwitted by a girl, that the Princess Hildegarde had eloped with a man who was not the chosen one. In other words, he saw himself laughed at from one end of the continent to the other. (There is something very funny in domestic troubles when they occur in another man's family!) No, the duke saw not the beauty of the night; instead of stars he saw asterisks, that abominable astronomy of the lampoonists. He had never doubted the girl's courage; but to elope! . . . And *who* the devil had eloped with her? He knew the girl's natural pride; whoever the fellow might be, he could be no less than a gentleman. But who, who?

"Your highness?" called a quiet (I might say deceptive) voice.

The duke came forth.

"Your highness will do me the honor to make out my passports to-night. I desire to leave the palace immediately. The affront you have put upon me, even under the circumstances, is wholly unpardonable. You imply that I have had something to do with her highness's act. You will excuse me to her serene highness, whom I love and respect. My dignity demands that I leave at once."

A flicker—but only a flicker—of admiration lighted the duke's eyes. It was a plucky little baggage.

"I will issue your passports upon one condition," he said.

"And that condition?" proudly.

"Tell me everything: Where has she gone, and with whom?"

"I know absolutely nothing."

Silence. The duke gnawed his mustache, while his eyes strove in vain to beat down hers.

"Thank you, I believe you." Then, giving way to his wrath: "You English people, you are all the same. You never understand. I have brought up this girl and surrounded her with every luxury; against my will and reason I have let her become educated in foreign lands; I have given her the utmost freedom; this is how I am repaid."

"You forgot one important thing, your highness."

"What?" haughtily.

"Affection. You have never given her that."

The duke felt himself beaten into silence, and this did not add to his amiability.

"Your passports shall be made out immediately; but I beg of you to reconsider your determination, and to remain here as long as you please. For the sake of appearances, I desire your presence at the dinner table."

"I shall leave at once the dinner is over." This girl's mind, when made up, was immovable.

The duke shrugged. There was no use in beating against this wall. "I wish you knew whither she has gone."

"Frankly, if I knew I should not tell

your highness. My father taught me never to betray a confidence."

"As you will. I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my entrance," he said, choking down his wrath. He could not allow himself to be outdone in the matter of coolness by this chit of an English girl.

"I grant it you."

The duke then retired, or, I should say, retreated. He wandered aimlessly about the palace, waiting for news and making wretched all those with whom he came into contact. The duchess was not feeling well; a wrangle with her was out of the question; besides, he would make himself hoarse. So he waited and waited, and re-read the princess's letter. At dinner he ate nothing; his replies were curt and surly. The Honorable Betty also ate nothing. She sat wondering whether her maid could pack five trunks in two hours.

I had quite a time of it myself that night. As I predicted, I received a visit from the police in regard to Mr. Scharfenstein. I explained the matter the best I knew how, and confessed that he had hurriedly left the city for parts unknown. I did not consider it as absolutely essential that I should declare that I had seen him enter a railway carriage for Dresden. Besides this, I had to stand sponsor for the other boys and explain at length that they were in no wise concerned with Mr. Scharfenstein's great offense. The police were courteous and deferential, admitting that Max was the culprit. He had drawn a revolver in a public restaurant; he had broken a grave law. The inspector wrote a dozen telegrams and despatched them from the consulate. I had, at his request, offered him the blanks.

At eleven I received a telephone call from the Continental Hotel. It was a woman's voice, and my heart beat violently as I recognized it. I was requested to come at once to the hotel. I should find her in the ladies' salon. I walked the distance in ten minutes. She told me all that had happened.

"By this time it is all over the city.

But it is all nonsense about her highness eloping with anyone. She is too nobly born to commit such a folly. She has simply run away; and I very much fear that she will be caught. The duke is in a terrible temper. I could not remain in the palace, for the duke believes that I know where she has gone. I have my passports. The British consul is away hunting. You were the only English-speaking person to whom I could come for aid."

"I am very glad."

"Will it be asking too much of you to aid me in leaving Barscheit tonight? There is a train at one o'clock for Dresden."

"Leave Barscheit?" My heart sank dismally.

"Oh," with a smile, "the world is small and England is even smaller."

"I shall have to give up the consulate," gravely.

She laughed. "I shall be in England for something more than a year. Truthfully, I hunger for mine own people. You know what that hunger is."

"Yes. I shall go home as often as possible now. I always stop a few days in London."

"Then I shall expect to see you; perhaps during the holidays. I am determined to leave Barscheit before the duke changes his mind. Heavens, he may put me in prison!"

"I doubt that."

I saw to it that she secured a sleeping-compartment all to herself, took charge of her luggage and carefully examined her papers. Then we had a small supper. I wanted to ask a thousand questions, but my courage lacked the proper key.

"May I have the pleasure of writing to you occasionally?" I finally ventured. "I am sure that you would like a bit of Barscheit gossip from time to time."

"Write to me, by all means. I shall await these letters with great pleasure."

"And answer them?" growing bolder.

"It is easily to be seen that you are a diplomat. Yes, I shall answer them. Heigho! I shall miss my rides." What a brave little woman she was!

Finally we started for the station, and I saw her to the gates. We shook hands, and I'm sure I felt a very friendly pressure; and then she disappeared. There was altogether a different feeling in my heart as I watched *her* train draw out. Eh, well, the world is small and England is smaller, even as she had said. It's a mighty fine world, when you get the proper angle of vision.

On with my seven-league boots and my fairy-cap! Let us see what that fellow Max has been doing all this while.

IX

THERE was very little light in the compartment into which Max had so successfully dived. Someone had turned down the wicks of the oil lamps which hung suspended between the luggage-racks above, and the gloom was notable rather than subdued. So far as he was concerned he was perfectly agreeable; his security was all the greater. He pressed his face against the window and peered out. The lights of the city flashed by, and finally grew few and far between, and then the blackness of the country. It would take an hour and a half to cross the frontier, and there would be no stop this side, for which he was grateful. He swore, mumbling. To have come all this way to study, and then to leg it in this ignominious fashion! It was downright scandalous! Who ever heard of such laws? Of course he had been rather silly in pulling his gun, for even in the United States—where he devoutly wished himself at that moment—it was a misdemeanor to carry concealed weapons. He felt of his cheek. He would return some day, and if it was the last thing he ever did, he would slash that lieutenant's cheeks. The insolent beggar! To be struck and not to strike back! He choked.

Gradually his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, and he cast about.

"The deuce!" he muttered.

He was not alone. Huddled in the

far corner was a woman heavily veiled. Young or old he could not tell. She sat perfectly motionless, and appeared to be looking out of the opposite window. Well, so long as she did not bother him he would not bother her. But he would much rather have been alone.

He took out his passport and tried to read it. It was impossible. So he rose, steadied himself, and turned up the wick of one of the lamps.

He did not hear the muffled exclamation which came from the other end.

He dropped back upon the cushion and began to read. So he was George Ellis, an American student in good standing; he was aged twenty-nine, had blue eyes, light hair, was six feet tall, and weighed one hundred and fifty-four pounds. Ha! he had, then, lost thirty pounds in as many minutes? At this rate he wouldn't cast a shadow when he struck Dresden. He had studied three years at the college; but what the deuce had he studied? If they were only asleep at the frontier! He returned the document to his pocket, and as he did so his fingers came into contact with the purse he had picked up in the road that morning—Hildegard von Heideloff. What meant Fate in crossing *her* path with his? He had been perfectly contented in mind and heart before that first morning ride; and here he was, sighing like a furnace. She had been merely pretty on Monday, on Tuesday she had been even handsome, on Wednesday she had been adorable; now she was the most beautiful woman that ever lived. (Ah, the progressive adjective, that litany of love!) Alas! it was quite evident that she had passed out of his life as suddenly and mysteriously as she had entered it. He would keep the purse as a souvenir, and some day, when he was an old man, he would open it.

There is something compelling in the human eye, a magnetism upon which Science has yet to put her cold and unromantic finger. Have you never experienced the sensation that someone was looking at you? Doubtless you

have. Well, Max presently turned his glance toward his silent fellow-traveler. She had lifted the veil and was staring at him with wondering, fearing eyes. These eyes were somewhat red, as if the little bees of grief had stung them.

"You!" he cried, the blood thumping into his throat. He tossed his hat to the floor and started for her end of the compartment.

She held up a hand as if to ward off his approach. "I can hear perfectly," she said; "it is not needful that you should come any nearer."

He sat down, confused. He could not remember when his heart had beaten so irregularly.

"May I ask how you came to enter this compartment?" she asked coldly.

"I jumped in," simply. What was to account for this strange attitude?

"So I observe. What I meant was, by what right?"

"It happened to be the only door at hand, and I was in a great hurry." Where was his usual collectedness of thought? He was embarrassed and angry at the knowledge.

"Did you follow me?" Her nostrils were palpitating and the corners of her mouth were drawn aggressively.

"Follow you?" amazed that such an idea should enter into her head. "Why, you are the last person I ever expected to see again. Indeed, you are only a fairy-story; there is, I find, no such person as Hildegard von Heidehoff." It will be seen by this that he was recovering by degrees.

"I know it," candidly. "It was my mother's name, and I saw fit to use it." She really hoped he *hadn't* followed her.

"You had no need to use it, or any name, for that matter. When I gave you my name it was given in good faith that I was and am a gentleman. The act did not imply that I desired to know yours."

"But you did!" imperiously.

"Yes. Curiosity is the brain of our mental anatomy." When Max began to utter tall phrases it was a sign of even-balanced mentality.

"And if I hadn't told you my name, you would have asked for it."

"Not the first day."

"Well, you would have on Tuesday."

"Not a bit of a doubt." He certainly wouldn't show her how much he cared. (What was she doing in this carriage? She had said nothing about traveling that morning.)

"Well, you will admit that under the circumstances I had the right to give any name it pleased me to give."

He rose and came over to her end and sat down. Her protests (half-hearted) he ignored.

"I cannot see very well from over there," he explained.

"It is not necessary that you should see; you can hear what I have to say."

"Very well; I'll go back." And he did. He made a fine pretense of looking out of the window. Why should this girl cross his path at this unhappy moment?

There was a pause.

"You are not near so nice as you were this morning," she said presently.

"I can't be nice and sit away over here."

"What made you jump into this compartment, of all others?"

"I wasn't particular what compartment I got into so long as I got into one. As I said, I was in a hurry."

"You said nothing about going away from Barscheit this morning."

"Neither did you."

Another pause. (I take it, from the character of this dialogue, that their morning rides must have been rather interesting.)

"You told me that you were in Barscheit to study nerves," wickedly.

"So thought I, up to half-past nine tonight; but it appears that I am not," gloomily.

"You are running away, too?" with suppressed eagerness.

"Running away, too!" he repeated. "Are *you* running away?"

"As fast as ever the train can carry me. I am on the way to Dresden."

"Dresden? It seems that Fate is determined that we shall travel to-

gether this day. Dresden is my destination also."

"Let me see your passports," extending a firm white hand.

He obeyed docilely, as docilely as though he were married. She gave the paper one angry glance and tossed it back.

"George Ellis; so that is your name?" scornfully. "You told me that it was Scharfenstein. I did not ask you to tell me your name; you took that service upon yourself." She recalled the duke's declaration that he should have her every movement watched. If this American was watching her, the duke was vastly more astute than she had given him the credit for being. "Are you in the pay of the duke? Come, confess that you have followed me, that you have been watching me for these four days." How bitter the cup of romance tasted to her now! She had been deceived. "Well, you shall never take me from this train save by force. I *will* not go back!"

"I haven't the slightest idea of what you are talking about," he said, mightily discouraged. "I never saw this country till Monday, and never want to see it again."

"From what are you running away then?" skeptically.

"I am running away from a man who slapped me in the face," bitterly; and all his wrongs returned to him.

"Indeed!" derisively.

"Yes, I!" He thrust out both his great arms miserably. "I'm a healthy-looking individual, am I not, to be running away from anything?"

"Especially after having been a soldier in the Spanish War. Why did you tell me that your name was Scharfenstein?"

"Heaven on earth, it *is* Scharfenstein! I'm simply taking my chance on another man's passports."

"I am unconvinced," ungraciously. She was, however, inordinately happy; at the sight of the picture of woe on his face all her trust in him returned. She believed every word he said, but she wanted to know everything.

"Very well; I see that I must tell

you everything to get back into your good graces—Fräulein von Heideloff."

"If you *ever* were in my good graces!"

Graphically he recounted the adventure at Muller's. He was a capital story-teller, and he made a very good impression.

"If it hadn't been for the princess eloping I would not have been here," he concluded, "for my friend would have had a waiter bring me that chair."

"The princess eloping!" aghast.

"Why, yes. It seems that she eloped tonight; so the report came from the palace."

The girl sat tight, as they say; then suddenly she burst into uncontrollable laughter. It was the drollest thing she had ever heard. She saw the duke tearing around the palace, ordering the police hither and thither, sending telegrams, waking his advisers and dragging them from their beds. My! what a hubbub! Suddenly she grew serious.

"Have you the revolver still?"

"Yes."

"Toss it out of the window; quick!"

"But . . ."

"Do as I say. They will naturally search you at the frontier."

He took out the revolver and gazed regretfully at it, while the girl could not repress a shudder.

"What a horrible-looking thing!"

"I carried it all through the war."

"Throw it away and buy a new one."

"But the associations!"

"They will lock you up as a dangerous person." She let down the window and the cold night air rushed in. "Give it to me." He did so. She flung it far into the night. "There, that is better. Some day you will understand."

"I will never understand anything in this country. . . . What are *you* running away from?"

"A man with a red nose."

"A red nose? Are they so frightful here as all that?"

"This one is. He wants—to marry me."

"Marry you!"

"Yes; rather remarkable that any

man should desire me as a wife, isn't it?"

He saw that she was ironical. Having nothing to say, he said nothing, but looked longingly at the vacant space beside her.

She rested her chin upon the sill of the window and gazed at the stars. The wild rush of the wind beat upon her face, bringing a thousand vague heavy perfumes and a pleasant numbing. How cleverly she had eluded the duke's police! What a brilliant idea it had been to use her private carriage key to steal into the carriage compartment long before the train was made up! It had been some trouble to light the lamps, but in doing so she had avoided the possible dutiful guard. He *had* peered in, but, seeing that the lamps were lighted, concluded that one of his fellows had been the rounds. The police would watch all those who entered or left the station, but never would they think to search a carriage into which no one was seen to enter. But oh, what a frightful predicament she was in! All she possessed in the world was a half-crown, scarce enough for her breakfast. And if she did not find her governess at once she would be lost utterly, and in Dresden! She choked back the sob. Why couldn't they let her be? She didn't want to marry anyone—that is, just yet. She didn't want her wings clipped before she had learned what a fine thing it was to fly. She was young.

"Oh!"

"What is it?" she said, turning.

"I have something of yours," answered Max, fumbling in his pocket, grateful for some excuse to break the silence. "You dropped your purse this morning. Permit me to return it to you. I hadn't the remotest idea how I was going to return it. In truth, I had just made up my mind to keep it as a souvenir."

She literally snatched it from his extended hand.

"My purse! My purse! And I thought it was gone forever!" hugging it hysterically to her heart. She feverishly tried to unlatch the clasps.

"You need not open it," he said quietly, even proudly. "I had not thought of looking into it, even to prove your identity."

"Pardon! I did not think. I was so crazy to see it again." She laid the purse beside her. "You see," with a hysterical catch in her voice, "all the money I had in the world was in that purse, and I was running away without any money, and only heaven knows what misfortunes were about to befall me. There were, and are, a thousand crowns in the purse."

"A thousand crowns?"

"In bank-notes. Thank you, thank you! I am so happy!" clasping her hands. Then, with a smile as warm as the summer's sun, she added: "You may . . . come and sit close beside me. You may even smoke."

Max grew light-headed. This was as near heaven as he ever expected to get.

"Open your purse and look into it," he said. "I'm a brute; you are dying to do so."

"May I?" shyly.

Then it came into Max's mind, with all the brilliancy of a dynamo spark, that this was the one girl in all the world, the ideal he had been searching for; and he wanted to fall at her feet and tell her so.

"Look!" she cried gleefully, holding up the packet of bank-notes.

"I wish," he said boyishly, "that you didn't have any money at all, so I could help you and feel that you depended upon me."

She smiled. How a woman loves this simple kind of flattery! It tells her better what she may wish to know than a thousand hymns sung in praise of her beauty.

But even as he spoke a chill of horror went over Max. He put his hand hurriedly into his vest pocket. Fool! Ass! How like a man! In changing his clothes at the consulate he had left his money, and all he had with him was some pocket change.

The girl saw his action and read the sequence in the look of dismay which spread over his face.

"You have no money either?" she cried. She separated the packet of notes into two equal parts. "Here!"

He smiled weakly.

"Take them!"

"No, a thousand times no! I have a watch, and there's always a pawn-broker handy, even in Europe."

"You offered to help me," she insisted.

"It is not quite the same."

"Take a quarter of it."

"No. Don't you understand? I really couldn't."

"One, just one, then!" she pleaded.

An idea came to him. "Very well; I will take one." And when she gave it to him he folded it reverently and put it away.

"I understand!" she cried. "You are just going to keep it; you don't intend to spend it at all. Don't be foolish!"

"I shall notify my friend, when we reach Dopplekinn, that I am without funds, and he will telegraph to Dresden. Oh, I have no cause to worry."

"Your friends were very wise in sending you away as they did. Aren't you always getting into trouble?"

"Yes. But I doubt the wisdom of my friends in sending me away as they did," with a frank glance into her eyes. How beautiful they were, now that the sparkle of mischief had left them!

She looked away. If only Dopplekinn were young like this! She sighed.

"Can they force one to marry in this country?" he asked abruptly.

"When one is in my circumstances."

He wanted to ask what those circumstances were, but what he said was: "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

"You are even more helpless than I am," softly. "If you are caught you will be imprisoned. I shall only suffer a temporary loss of liberty; my room will be my dungeon-keep." How big and handsome and strong he looked! What a terrible thing it was to be born in purple! "Tell me about yourself."

His hand strayed absently toward

his upper vest pocket, and then fell to his side. He licked his lips.

"Smoke!" she commanded intuitively. "I said that you might."

"I can talk better when I smoke," he advanced rather lamely. "May I, then?" gratefully.

"I command it!"

Wasn't it fine to be ordered about in this fashion? If only the train might go on and on and on, thousands of miles! He applied a match to the end of his cigar and leaned back against the cushion.

"Where shall I begin?"

"At the beginning. I'm not one of those novel readers who open a book at random. I do not appreciate effects till I have found out the causes. I want to know everything about you, for you interest me."

He began. He told her that he was a German by birth and blood. He had been born either in Germany or in Austria, he did not know which. He had been found in Tyrol, in a railway station. A guard had first picked him up, then a kind-hearted man named Scharfenstein had taken him in charge, advertised for his parents and, hearing nothing, took him to America with him.

"If they should catch you," she interrupted, "do not under any consideration let them know that you were not born in the United States. Your friend the American consul could do nothing for you then."

"Trust me to keep silent, then."

He continued: "I have lived a part of my life on the great plains; have ridden horses for days and days at a time. As a deputy sheriff I have arrested desperados, have shot and been shot at. Then I went East and entered a great college, went in for athletics, and wore my first dress-suit. Then my foster-parent died, leaving me his fortune. And as I am frugal, due possibly to my German origin, I have more money than I know what to do with." He ceased.

"Go on," she urged.

"When the Spanish War broke out I entered a cavalry regiment as a

trooper. I won rank, but surrendered it after the battle of Santiago. And now there are but two things in the world I desire to complete my happiness. I want to know who I am."

"And the other thing."

"The other thing? I can't tell *you* that!" hurriedly.

"Ah, I believe I know. You have left some sweetheart back in America." All her interest in his narrative took a strange and unaccountable slump.

"No; I have often admired women, but I have left no sweetheart back in America. If I had I should now feel very uncomfortable."

Somehow she couldn't meet his eyes. She recognized, with vague anger, that she was glad that he had no sweetheart. Ah, well, nobody could rob her of her right to dream, and this was a very pleasant dream.

"The train is slowing down," he said suddenly.

"We are approaching the frontier." She shaded her eyes and searched the speeding blackness outside.

"How far is it to the capital?" he asked.

"It lies two miles beyond the frontier."

Silence fell upon them, and at length the train stopped with a jerk. In what seemed to them an incredibly short time a guard unlocked the door. He peered in.

"Here they are, sure enough, your excellency!" addressing someone in the dark beyond.

An officer from the military household of the Prince of Dopplekinn was instantly framed in the doorway. The girl tried to lower her veil; too late.

"I am sorry to annoy your highness," he began, "but the grand duke's orders are that you shall follow me to the castle. Lieutenant, bring two men to tie this fellow's hands," nodding toward Scharfenstein.

Max stared dumbly at the girl. All the world seemed to have slipped from under his feet.

"Forgive me!" she said, lowly but impulsively.

"What does it mean?" His heart was very heavy.

"I am the Princess Hildegarde of Barscheit, and your entering this carriage has proved the greatest possible misfortune to you."

He stared helplessly. . . . And everything had been going along so nicely—the dinner he had planned in Dresden, and all that!

"And they believe," the girl went on, "that I have eloped with you to avoid marrying the prince." She turned to the officer in the doorway. "Colonel, on the word of a princess, this gentleman is in no wise concerned. I ran away alone."

Max breathed easier.

"I should be most happy to believe your highness, but you will honor my strict observance of orders." He passed a telegram to her.

Search train for Dopplekinn. Princess has eloped. Arrest and hold pair till I arrive on special engine.

BARSCHEIT.

The telegraph is the true arm of the police. The princess sighed pathetically. It was all over.

"Your passports," said the colonel to Max.

Max surrendered his papers. "You need not tie my hands," he said calmly. "I will come peacefully."

The colonel looked inquiringly at the princess.

"He will do as he says."

"Very good. I should regret to shoot him upon so short an acquaintance." The colonel beckoned for them to step forth. "Everything is prepared. There is a carriage for the convenience of your highness; Herr Ellis shall ride horseback with the troop."

Max often wondered why he did not make a dash for it, or a running fight. What he had gone through that night was worth a good fight.

"Good-bye," said the princess, holding out her hand.

Scharfenstein gravely bent his head and kissed it.

"Good-bye, Prince Charming!" she whispered, so softly that Max scarcely heard her.

Then she entered the closed carriage and was driven up the dark, tree-enshrouded road that led to the castle of Dopplekinn.

"What are you going to do with me?" Max asked as he gathered up the reins of his mount.

"That we shall discuss later. Like as not something very unpleasant. For one thing you are passing under a forged passport. You are *not* an American, no matter how well you may speak that language. You are a German."

"There are Germans in the United States, born and bred there, who speak German tolerably well," replied Max easily. He was wondering if it would not be a good scheme to tell a straightforward story and ask to be returned to Barscheit. But then it would probably seem to the officer that he was a coward and was trying to lay the blame on the princess.

"I do not say that I can prove it," went on the colonel; "I simply affirm that you are a German, even to the marrow."

"You have the advantage of the discussion." No; he would confess nothing. If he did he might never see the princess again. . . . The princess! As far away as yonder stars! It was truly a very disappointing world to live in.

"Now, then, forward!" cried the colonel to his men, and they set off at a sharp trot.

From time to time, as a sudden twist in the road broke the straight line, Max could see the careening lights of the princess's carriage. A princess! And he was a man without a country or a name!

X

THE castle of the Princes of Dopplekinn rested in the very heart of the celebrated vineyards. Like all German castles I ever saw or heard of, it was a relic of the Middle Ages, with many a crumbling, useless tower and battlement. It stood on the south

side of a rugged hill which was gashed by a narrow but turbulent stream, in which lurked the rainbow trout that lured the lazy man from his labors afield. (And who among us shall cast a stone at the lazy man? Not I!) If you are fortunate enough to run about Europe next year, as like as not you will be mailing home the "Dopplekinn" post-card.

More than once I have wandered about the castle's interior, cavernous and musty, strolled through its galleries of ancient armor, searched its dungeon-keeps, or loitered to soliloquize in the gloomy judgment chamber. How time wars upon custom! In olden times they created pain; now they strive to subdue it.

I might go into a detailed history of the Dopplekinns, only it would be absurd and unnecessary, since it would be inappreciable under the name of Dopplekinn, which happens to be, as doubtless you have already surmised, a name of mine own invention. I could likewise tell you how the ancient Dukes of Barscheit fought off the insidious flattery of Napoleon, only it is a far interest, and Barscheit is simply a characteristic, not a name. Some day I may again seek a diplomatic mission, and what government would have for its representative a teller of tales out of school?

It was then—to continue the fortunes and misfortunes of Max Scharfenstein—close on to midnight when the cavalcade crossed the old moat-bridge, which hadn't moved on its hinges within a hundred years. They were not entering by the formal way, which was a flower-bedded, terraced road. It was the rear entrance. The iron doors swung outward with a plaintive moaning, like that of a man roused out of his sleep, and Max found himself in an ancient guard-room, now used as a kind of secondary stable. The men dismounted.

"This way, Herr Ellis," said the colonel, with a mocking bow. He pointed toward a broad stone staircase.

"All I ask," said Max, "is a fair chance to explain my presence here."

"All in due time. Forward! The prince is waiting, and his temper may not be as smooth as usual."

With two troopers in front of him and two behind, Max climbed the steps readily enough. They wouldn't dare to kill him, whatever they did. He tried to imagine himself the hero of some Scott or Dumas tale, with a grim cardinal somewhere above, and oubliettes and torture chambers besetting his path. But the absurdity of his imagination, so thoroughly Americanized, evoked a ringing laughter. The troopers eyed him curiously. He might laugh later, but it was scarcely probable. A tramp through a dark corridor and they came to the west wing of the castle. It was here that the old prince lived, comfortably and luxuriantly enough, you may take my word for it.

A door opened, flooding the corridor with light. Max felt himself gently pushed over the threshold. He stood in the great living-room of the modern Dopplekinns. The first person he saw was the princess. She sat on an Oriental divan. Her hands were folded; she sat very erect; her chin was tilted ominously; there was so little expression on her pale face that she might have been an incompleated statue. But Max was almost certain that there was just the faintest flicker of a smile in her eyes as she saw him enter. Glorious eyes! (It is a bad sign when a man begins to use the superlative adjectives!)

The other occupant of the room was an old fat man, and bald, with a nose like a russet pear. He was stalking—if it is possible for a short man to stalk—up and down the length of the room, and, judging from the sonorous, rumbling sound, was communing half aloud. He was rubbing between whiles his tender nose, carefully and tenderly rubbing it. When a man's nose resembles a russet pear it generally is tender. Whoever he was, Max saw that he was vastly agitated about something.

This old gentleman was (or supposed he was) the last of his line, the Prince of Dopplekinn, famous for his

wines and his love of them. There was, so his subjects said, but one tender spot in the heart of this old man, and that was the memory of the wife of his youth. (How the years, the good and bad, crowd behind us, pressing us on and on!) However, there was always surcease in the cellars—that is, the Dopplekinn cellars.

"Ha!" he roared as he saw the blinking Max. "So this is the fellow!" He made an eloquent gesture. "Your highness must be complimented upon your good taste. The fellow isn't bad-looking."

"When you listen to reason, prince," replied the girl calmly, "you will apologize to the gentleman and give him his liberty."

"Oh, he is a gentleman, is he?"

"You might learn from him many of the common rules of courtesy," tranquilly.

"Who the devil are you?" the prince demanded of Max.

"I should be afraid to tell you. I hold that I am Max Scharfenstein, but the colonel here declares that my name is Ellis. Who are you?" Max wasn't the least bit frightened. These were not feudal times.

The prince stared at him. The insolent puppy!

"I am the prince."

"Ah, your serene highness—" began Max, bowing.

"I am not called 'serene'," rudely. "The grand duke is 'serene'."

"Permit me to doubt that," interposed the girl, smiling.

Max laughed aloud, which didn't improve his difficulties any.

"I have asked you who you are!" bawled the prince, his nose turning purple.

"My name is Max Scharfenstein. I am an American. If you will wire the American consulate at Barscheit, you will learn that I have spoken the truth. All this is a mistake. The princess did *not* elope with me."

"His papers give the name of Ellis," said the colonel, touching his cap.

"Humph! We'll soon find out who he is and what may be done with him."

I'll wait for the duke. Take him into the library and lock the door. It's a hundred feet out of the window, and if he wants to break his neck, he may do so. It will save us so much trouble. Take him away! take him away!" his rage boiling to the surface.

The princess shrugged.

"I can't talk to you either," said the prince, turning his glowering eyes upon the girl. "I can't trust myself."

"Oh, do not mind me. I understand that your command of expletives is rather original. Go on; it will be my only opportunity." The princess rocked back and forward on the divan. Wasn't it funny!

"Lord help me, and I was perfectly willing to marry this girl!" The prince suddenly calmed down. "What have I ever done to offend you?"

"Nothing," she was forced to admit.

"I was lonely. I wanted youth about. I wanted to hear laughter that came from the heart and not from the mind. I do not see where I am to be blamed. The duke suggested you to me; I believed you to be willing. Why did you not say to me that I was not agreeable? It would have simplified everything."

"I am sorry," said the girl contritely. When he spoke like this he wasn't so unlovable.

"People say," he went on, "that I spend most of my time in my wine-cellars. Well," defiantly, "what else is there for me to do? I am alone." Max came within his range of vision.

"Take him away, I tell you!"

And the colonel hustled Max into the library.

"Don't try the window," he warned, but with rather a pleasant smile. He was only two or three years older than Max. "If you do, you'll break your neck."

"I promise not to try," replied Max. "My neck promises to serve me many years yet."

"It will not if you have the habit of running away with persons above you in quality. Actions like that are not permissible in Europe." The colonel spoke rather grimly, for all his smile.

The door slammed, there was a grinding of the key in the lock, and Max was alone.

The library at Dopplekinn was all the name implied. The cases were low and ran around the room, and were filled with romance, history, biography, and even poetry. The great circular reading-table was littered with new books, periodicals and illustrated weeklies. Once Dopplekinn had been threatened with a literary turn of mind, but a bad vintage coming along at the same time had effected a permanent cure.

Max slid into a chair and took up a paper, turning the pages at random. . . . What was the matter with the room? Certainly it was not close, nor damp, nor chill. What was it? He let the paper fall to the floor, and his eyes roved from one object to another. . . . Where had he seen that Chinese mask before, and that great silver-faced clock? Somehow, mysterious and strange as it seemed, all this was vaguely familiar to him. Doubtless he had seen a picture of the room somewhere. He rose and wandered about.

In one corner of the bookshelves stood a pile of boy's books and some broken toys. The dust of ages had accumulated upon them. He stooped and picked up a row of painted soldiers, and balanced them thoughtfully on his hand. Then he looked into one of the picture-books. It was a Santa Claus story; some of the pictures were torn and some stuck together, a reminder of sticky, candied hands. He gently replaced the book and the toys, and stared absently into space. How long he stood that way he did not recollect, but he was finally aroused by the sound of slamming doors and new voices. He returned to his chair and waited for the dénouement, which the marrow in his bones told him was about to approach.

It seemed incredible that he, of all persons, should be plucked out of the practical ways of men and thrust into the unreal fantasies of romance. A hubbub in a restaurant, a headlong

dash into a carriage compartment, a long ride with a princess, and all within three short hours! It was like some weird dream. And how the deuce would it end?

He gazed at the toys again.

And then the door opened and he was told to come out. The grand duke had arrived.

"This will be the final round-up," he laughed quietly, his thought whimsically traveling back to the great plains and the long rides under the starry night.

XI

THE Grand Duke of Barscheit was tall and angular and weather-beaten, and the whites of his eyes bespoke a constitution as sound and hard as his common sense. As Max entered he was standing at the side of Dopplekinn.

"There he is!" shouted the prince. "Do you know who he is?"

The duke took a rapid inventory. "Never set eyes upon him before." The duke then addressed her highness. "Hildegarde, who is this fellow? No evasions; I want the truth. I have, in the main, found you truthful."

"I know nothing of him at all," said the princess curtly.

Max wondered where the chill in the room came from.

"He says that his name is Scharfenstein," continued the princess, "and he has proved himself to be a courteous gentleman."

Max found that the room wasn't so chill as it might have been.

"Yet you eloped with him, and were on the way to Dresden," suggested the duke.

The princess faced them all proudly. "I eloped with no man. That was simply a little prevarication to worry you, my uncle, after the manner in which you have worried me. I was on my way to Dresden, it is true, but only to hide with my old governess. This gentleman jumped into my compartment as the train drew out of the station."

March 1905

"But you *knew* him!" bawled the prince, waving his arms.

"Do you know him?" asked the duke coldly.

"I met him out riding. He addressed me, and I replied out of common politeness," with a sidelong glance at Max, who stood with folded arms, watching her gravely.

The duke threw his hands above his head as if to call heaven to witness that he was a very much wronged man.

"Arnheim," he said to the young colonel, "go at once for a priest."

"A priest!" echoed the prince.

"Yes; the girl shall marry you to-night," declared his serene highness.

"Not if I live to be a thousand!" Dopplekinn struck the table with his fist.

The girl smiled at Max.

"What?" cried the duke, all the coldness gone from his tones. "You refuse?" He was thunder-struck.

"Refuse? Of course I refuse!" And the prince thumped the table again. "What do you think I am in my old age?—an ass? If you have any fillies to break, use your own pastures. I'm a vintner." He banged the table yet again. "Why, I wouldn't marry the Princess Hildegarde if she were the last woman on earth!"

"Thank you!" said the princess sweetly.

"You're welcome," said the prince.

"Silence!" bellowed the duke. "Dopplekinn, take care; this is an affront, not one to be lightly ignored. It is international news that you are to wed my niece."

"Tomorrow it will be international news that I'm *not*!" The emphasis this time threatened to crack the table-leaf. "I'm not going to risk my liberty with a girl who has no more sense of dignity than she has."

"It is very kind of you," murmured the princess.

"She'd make a fine wife," went on the prince, ignoring the interruption. "No, a thousand times no! Take her away; life's too short; take her away!"

Let her marry the fellow; he's young and may get over it."

The duke was furious. He looked around for something to strike, and, nothing but the table being convenient, he smashed a leaf and sent a vase clattering to the floor. He was stronger than the prince, otherwise there wouldn't have been a table to thwack.

"That's right; go on! Break all the furniture, if it will do you any good; but mark me, you'll foot the bill." The prince began to dance around. "I will not marry the girl. That's as final as I can make it. The sooner you calm down the better."

How the girl's eyes sparkled! She was free. The odious alliance would not take place.

"Who is that?"

Everybody turned and looked at Max. His arm was leveled in the direction of a fine portrait in oil which hung suspended over the fireplace. Max was very pale.

"What's that to you?" snarled the prince. He was what we Yankees call "hopping mad." The vase was worth a hundred crowns, and he never could find a leaf to replace the one just broken.

"I believe I have a right to know who that woman is up there." Max spoke quietly. As a matter of fact he was too weak to speak otherwise.

"A right to know? What do you mean?" demanded the prince. "It is my wife."

With trembling fingers Max produced his locket.

"Will you look at this?" he asked in a voice that was a bit shaky.

The prince stepped forward and jerked the locket from Max's hand. But the moment he saw the contents his jaw fell and he rocked on his heels unsteadily and staggered back toward the duke for support.

"What's the matter, prince?" asked the duke anxiously. After all Doppelkinn was an old crony, and mayhap he had been harsh with him.

"Where did you get that?" asked the prince hoarsely.

"I have always worn it," answered

Max. "The chain that went with it originally will no longer fit my neck."

"Arnheim! . . . Duke! . . . come and look at this!" feebly.

"Good heaven!" cried the duke.

"It is the princess!" said Arnheim in awed tones.

"Where did you get it?" demanded the prince again.

"I was found with it around my neck."

"Duke, what do you think?" asked the agitated prince.

"What do I think?"

"Yes. This was around my son's neck the day he was lost. If this should be! . . . If it were possible!"

"What?" The duke looked from the prince to the man who had worn the locket. Certainly there wasn't any sign of likeness. But when he looked at the portrait on the wall and then at Max doubt grew in his eyes. They were somewhat alike. He plucked nervously at his beard.

"Prince," said Max, "before heaven I believe that I may be . . . your son!"

"My son!"

By this time they were all tremendously excited and agitated and white; all save the princess, who was gazing at Max with sudden gladness in her eyes, while over her cheeks there stole the phantom of a rose. If it were true!

"Let me tell you my story," said Max. (It is not necessary for me to repeat it again.)

The prince turned helplessly toward the duke, but the duke was equally dazed.

"But we can't accept just a story as proof," the duke said. "It isn't as if he were one of the people. It wouldn't matter then. But it's a future prince. Let us go slow."

"Yes, let us go slow," repeated the prince, brushing his damp forehead.

"Wait a moment!" said Colonel Arnheim, stepping forward. "Only one thing will prove his identity to me; not all the papers in the world can do it."

"What do you know?" cried the prince, bewildered.

"Something I have not dared tell till this moment," miserably.

"Curse it, you are keeping us waiting!" The duke kicked about the shattered bits of porcelain.

"I used to play with the . . . the young prince," began Arnheim. "Your highness will recollect that I did." Arnheim went over to Max. "Take off your coat." Max did so, wondering. "Roll up your sleeve." Again Max obeyed, and his wonder grew. "See!" cried the colonel in a high, unnatural voice, due to his unusual excitement. "Oh, there can be no doubt. It is your son!"

The duke and the prince bumped against each other in their mad rush to inspect Max's arm. Arnheim's finger rested upon the peculiar scar I mentioned.

"Lord help us, it's your wine-case brand!" gasped the duke.

"My wine-case!" The prince was almost on the verge of tears.

The girl sat perfectly quiet.

"Explain, explain!" said Max.

"Yes, yes! How did this come?—put there?" spluttered the prince.

"Your highness, we—your son—we were playing in the wine-cellars that day," stammered the unhappy Arnheim. "I saw . . . the hot iron . . . I was a boy of no more than five . . . I branded the prince on the arm. He cried so that I was frightened and ran and hid. When I went to look for him he was gone. Oh, I know; there is no doubt; it is your son."

"I'll take your word for it, colonel!" cried the prince. "I said from the first that he wasn't bad-looking. Didn't I, princess?" He then turned embarrassedly toward Max and timidly held out his hand. That was as near sentiment as ever the father and son came, but it was genuine. "Ho, steward! Hans, you rascal, where are you?"

The steward presently entered, shading his eyes.

"Your highness called?"

"That I did. That's Max come home!"

"Little Max?"

"Little Max. Now, candles, and

march yourself to the packing cellars. Off with you!" The happy old man slapped the duke on the shoulder. "I've an idea, Josef."

"What is it?" asked the duke, also, very well pleased with events.

"I'll tell you all about it when we get into the cellar." But the nod toward the girl and the nod toward Max was a liberal education.

"I am pardoned?" said Arnheim.

"Pardoned? My boy, if I had an army I would make you a general!" roared the prince. "Come along, Josef. And you, Arnheim! You troopers out of here, every one of you, and leave these two young persons alone!"

And out of the various doors the little company departed, leaving the princess and Max alone.

Ah, how everything was changed! thought Max, as he let down his sleeve and buttoned his cuff. A prince! He was a prince; he, Max Scharfenstein, cowboy, quarter-back, trooper, doctor, was a prince! If it was a dream, he was going to box the ears of the bell-boy who woke him up. But it wasn't a dream; he knew it wasn't. The girl yonder didn't dissolve into mist and disappear; she was living, living! He had now the right to love anyone he chose, and he *did* choose to love this beautiful girl, who, with lowered eyes, was nervously plucking the ends of the pillow tassel. It was all changed for her, too.

"Princess!" he said a bit brokenly.

"I am called Gretchen by my friends," with a boldness that only half disguised her real timidity. What would he do, this big, handsome fellow, who had turned out to be a prince, fairy-tale wise?

"Gretchen? I like that better than Hildegard; it is less formal. Well, then, Gretchen, I can't explain it, but this new order of things has given me a tremendous backbone." He crossed the room to her side. "You will not wed my—my father?"

"Never in all this world!" slipping around the table, her eyes dim like the bloom on the grape. She ought not to be afraid of him, but she was.

"But I . . ."

"You have known me only four days," she whispered faintly. "You cannot know your mind."

"Oh, when one is a prince," laughing, "it takes no time at all. I love you. I knew it was going to be when you looked around in old Bauer's smithy."

"Did I look around?" innocently.

"You certainly did, for I looked around and saw you."

They paused. (There is no pastime quite like it.)

"But they say that I am wild like a young horse." (Love is always finding some argument which he wishes to have knocked under.)

"Not to me," ardently. "You may ride a bicycle every day, if you wish."

"I'd rather have an automobile," drolly.

"An airship, if money will buy it!"

"They say—my uncle says—that I am not capable of loving anything."

"What do I care what they say? Will you be my wife?"

"Give me a week to think it over."

"No!"

(She liked that!)

"A day, then?"

"Not an hour!"

(She liked this still better!)

"Oh!"

"Not half an hour!"

"This is almost as bad as the duke; you are forcing me."

"If you do not answer yes or no at once, I'll go back to Barscheit and trounce that fellow who struck me. I can do it now."

"Well—but only four days . . .?"

"Hours! Think of riding together forever!" joyously, taking a step nearer.

"I dare not think of it. It is all so like a dream. . . . Oh!" bursting into tears (what unaccountable beings women are!)"—"if you do *not* love me!"

"Don't I, though!"

Then he started around the table in pursuit of her, in all directions, while, after the manner of her kind, she balked him, rosily, star-eyed. They laughed; and when two young people laugh it is a sign that all goes well with the world. He never would tell just how long it took him to catch her, nor would he tell me what he did when he caught her. Neither would I, had I been in his place!

"Here's!" said the prince.

"It's a great world," added the duke.

"For surprises," supplemented the prince. "Ho, Hans! A fresh candle!"

And the story goes that his serene highness of Barscheit and his highness of Dopplekinn were found peacefully asleep in the cellars, long after the sun had rolled over the blue Carpathians.



THE PROFESSIONAL PEACEMAKER

SOME glancing words we changed in sportive vein:
The Peacemaker, upon his busy way,

In soft, dull phrase bade us from wrath refrain:

Alas! our feud was dated from that day!

EDITH M. THOMAS.



MOST of us have a mission, but never to mind our own business.

A MAN UNLEARNED

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

THERE were no two people of the same mind about Tom Cleveland's relation to his wife. One said he was afraid of her, one that he was proud of her, one that he didn't understand her, and so on without end. No one, it seemed, hit upon the too simple statement that he loved her. And yet the zone of that condition clasped all the rest. For within it was measured his fear, his pride, his inability to comprehend, and many other things the world found more important than the great, overwhelming love he bore her.

She was so glaringly more clever than he, not clever only, but gifted, and it was seen that Cleveland handled her books with the reverence he might have bestowed upon the *pain sacré*, if he had been anything so picturesque as a Catholic.

He wasn't, alas, picturesque at anything. In his business as well as his pleasure he was of the matter-of-fact, sharp-cornered, plain-surfaced creatures who remain everlastingly detached from surroundings and unmellowed by them.

And yet he knew so much more than people believed, he was so much more sensitive than he seemed, so much more awake to the subtleties supposed to pass unheeded. And in his great, silent way he watched his wife closely, painfully, magnifying his own shortcomings and manufacturing many fancied disappointments for her that might have put her to the blush with their ingenious and delicate intricacy.

It had been so long an accepted future with him that some day she would too utterly weary of him to

maintain longer the pretense of their equality, that he came actually to wait for the thing, as a man sentenced might wait for the inevitable day of doom. And sometimes he fairly wished he might go to meet it rather than have it creep so torturingly slow upon him.

Antona herself seemed quite content. She took her successes calmly, quietly, without the slightest change in the demeanor of her victory. As book after book came at decent intervals from the press, piling her tower of fame higher and wider with each edition, she would simply say that "she was glad," and go on working a little harder than before.

Here, too, the ever-ready friend came forward with an explanation—Antona was working merely to fill the dreadful emptiness of her life. And many were disposed to believe it. Surely she must miss the ineffable something, that breath of the heart which for want of a name is called sympathy—a poor, threadbare word, come to be worth little for having spent its all too recklessly. Surely she would have been happier, more satisfied, with that real satisfaction that is ever demanding more, if her husband could have been really her mate, a man who could go with her in all her wonderlands, who could have led her into far places of which she never dreamed, could have kept ahead of her and yet beside her—never behind her—a man, in short, like John Gaillard. And when these people went as far as this, they usually dropped their voices to a tone in keeping with the mysterious sugges-

tion, and with the sigh that almost invariably accompanied it.

John Gaillard had come to New York a few years after her marriage, about a year since, and straightway with the luck, aplomb, power and opportunity that seem to fall invariably to the aid of some selected men, he had made the place his own. He was not a young man, though he seemed still in the thirties; nor was he a handsome man—spare, somewhat stooping, perhaps from looking down into people's faces, with a thin, gaunt visage deeply lined at the eyes. Tom Cleveland beside him looked an athletic god, and that was all. For the face of the other man shone with the flashes of a light that would eclipse Phœbus himself and make him conscious of the muddiness of this clay. There was an extraordinary mixture of English, French and Irish blood in his veins, and he seemed to have gathered all their various charms unto himself.

The world took him up promptly, and yet with a sincerity that lacked the ephemeral qualities of a fad. He was a brilliant success at the clubs where he was put up, and his quiet, natural indifference under his triumph was pleasing to the conventional New Yorker. He went in very quietly to make friends with the men who were "distinctly worth while," not because he snobbishly singled them out, but because he drifted to them naturally and they welcomed him.

Tom Cleveland was one of the first to come under his spell, and the reason of it was a curious one. Unconsciously in the many days in which Cleveland had been noting his shortcomings, and imagining the many he could not quite define, he had been building in his mind the man he should have been, the man Antona should have married. And when, one day, the two met for the first time, Cleveland was bewilderingly aware of the presence of his ideal. Gaillard was not just as he had pictured him physically, for Cleveland's standard of masculine beauty was rather more powerfully molded; and yet the charm of the man's physique

was undeniably greater than that of his own ideal, and he realized that where Gaillard disappointed him, Gaillard went indefinitely beyond.

It was of course bound to be a little startling at the first, a little unsettling. But when the feeling passed he was so frankly won by the newcomer that Gaillard was pleased and touched and, appreciating as few others had ever done what lay behind the man's commercial front, became his friend.

Cleveland, in all the flush of pleasure he invariably experienced when something came to his hand that he could do for Antona, took John Gaillard to dinner at his perfect home, and brought the two together with a gleaming flourish. It delighted him to see how Antona held her own with the brilliant guest, how evidently was the man impressed with her, and he listened delightedly to the talk which he could understand but not imitate. Antona, who of late had grown a little listless, a little disinclined for gaiety and merri-ness, became her own old sparkling self, glowing with the excitement of the new experience and radiant in the effortless race that she was running with the stranger wit. Cleveland was proud of them both, proud of his wife, proud of his new friend, and when Gaillard with a sigh realized he could not in all decency prolong his stay, his host went with him beaming to the door.

"I can't tell you, man, how grateful, how humbly grateful I am to you," said Gaillard, turning for the twentieth time from the open street door as if he could scarcely leave the very house, "for giving me the privilege of this." The word included everything—the house, the hours, the dinner and the man and woman to whom he owed it all and all themselves.

Cleveland laughed consciously. "Come in often," he said in honest hospitality. "She likes you, I like you. Make the place your own."

When he went back, still in the glory of his pleasure, to the drawing-room, he was disappointed to find Antona, stripped of her animation and viva-

cious brilliancy, flung rather wearily into an easy-chair and not disposed to raise her eyes or move her hand.

"You're tired!" said Cleveland, with a sudden drop into contrition. "You've worn yourself out to entertain my guest."

"I am tired," said she somewhat slowly.

"Don't you think," ventured the man hesitatingly, for it was seldom he took the liberty to suggest any change in the ways of her working, "perhaps you are writing too much?"

To his surprise she quietly agreed with him. "I think I am," she said.

"Then take a rest. Let's go abroad. I have been working very hard myself." She lifted her eyes then with a question. He met it somewhat shamefacedly. "Oh, I won't, you know, have you making more money than I do."

She smiled at him and her eyes closed and she said nothing.

"Take a vacation," he urged tenderly.

She merely moved her head a little impatiently.

"You'll kill yourself," he said.

"And then?"

"Nonsense, Antona, you don't want to die!"

"Certainly not," said Antona. "Dying is quite another matter."

"Oh," Cleveland wondered.

"Besides," continued his wife, "I can't stop working until the book is finished."

He had to bow to that superior importance. To do him justice there was a good deal of nobleness in Cleveland's self-effacement. But he continued to fret about her silently, watching her grow thinner and more listless, as she worked incessantly through the days, and it made him more than ever glad to have John Gaillard come and spend the evenings. It seemed to please her, and by the mere change of the atmosphere to rest her. He did come often—perhaps, to please Mrs. Grundy, too often—but not half enough for Tom Cleveland. He would sit by as always, listening to their amazing talk; it didn't take much to amaze

the simple soul. Their easy familiarity with the mysteries of bookmaking filled him with a humble admiration. To be sure, after many months of more or less impatient teaching, Antona had taught him to correct her proof, and it pleased him to help her in even so mechanical a way. But he always handled the long, ungainly sheets with something like alarm and nervousness, and the rest of the shrouded process of the book's evolution remained an unthinkable mystery. As for the writing of it, that of course was a subject not to be approached by him! They talked of it with absolute flippancy, and went deeply into the faults and excellencies of other authors with a calm assurance that reminded him of the perilous poise of the surgeon's knife.

They had forsaken the drawing-room in these days for the more intimate comfort of her library, her inner and upper sanctum, the most wonderful room in the house, an extravagant dream of a day when its realization seemed ludicrously impossible. It was at the very top of the house, the whole tremendous floor, reached by a little lift, and far beyond the reach of annoying interruptions. There wasn't a window in the walls, but the roof was a window of golden glass which during the daytime brightened the sunlight itself. At night the room was softly lighted by many candles, unless she chose to work beside her student's lamp. The walls were nothing but books, a collection begun by her father's father, and continued through the three generations, books straight to the ceiling, with little workaday ladders sliding along in the brass groove in the floor to bring the most inaccessible volume within easy reach. There was a fireplace made in the olden way with a deep inclosure for its settles, and carved with elfish faces so cleverly disposed that they caught one unaware, flickering eerily in the firelight with shifting expressions. Against this background of almost masculine practicability, the softer comfort of a woman's room made itself an alluring invitation. The couch with its luxurious

pillows, the long lounging-chairs, the exquisite little wagon with its silver tea things, and, most speaking of all, the long gilded mirror at the farthest end, spoke of the presence of a woman with all the charm that she could lend to them.

One night, perhaps two months since Gaillard had come to be their friend, when they were all deliciously at rest in the great room, the fire-light, going suddenly into a brighter blaze, showed to the careful eyes of Cleveland the miracle of tears upon his wife's dark lashes. In all their life together it was the first time he had seen them there. It came to him so sharply, with such a sudden, unexpected blow, that he sat staring at her almost without breathing, but her eyes were on the fire and she did not notice her detection. Gaillard was speaking in his usual indifferent raillery of himself.

"It's perfectly true," he said, "we make copy out of our own mothers' deaths. We can't help it! Looking through our eyes, hearing through our ears, there is always the impish observer that furnishes us with our material. He sees, and notes, and takes heed we don't forget, takes heed to follow the impression to all its varying suggestions. The thing may be used so long after that we don't recognize the source of the idea, but, somehow, I believe, we never wrote a word that did not come, at least by suggestion, from the observations of that heartless little imp." He laughed a little in the pause that followed. "I shall probably make copy out of that," he said.

"Oh, don't you often," said Antona, and to Cleveland's astonishment her voice was tremorless and calm, "make notes of some fairly good thing that you have said to use again in writing? Can you help it?"

"I rarely say a good thing," answered Gaillard. "When they come to me—we are all of us weak at times—I shut them up in a bottle, and drip them into my writing as one drips oil into mayonnaise."

Antona laughed, her hand going

stealthily to her eyes. But she could not wipe away the remembrance of the tears from the faithful heart who sat and watched. It came to him again with a new alarm that Antona was working too hard, harder than she had ever worked before, and that she wouldn't let him take the care of her that she needed. He was glad Gaillard came so regularly in the evenings, for that at least enforced a little rest and relaxation. Whenever he spoke to her of his anxiety she merely touched his cheek gently, and said, "The book is not yet done," and he would stare down helplessly at her wasting face with the blue circles of shadow beneath the eyes.

The days went on like this, and the only comfort Cleveland could take in her feverish indefatigability was that the harder she worked the sooner the book would be done. Gaillard spoke to him about it as he was leaving late one night.

"Finish the book, yes, if she doesn't finish herself first! She is going all to pieces, can't you see?"

Tom Cleveland groaned. "See? Why, good God, Gaillard, haven't I been on my knees begging her for months to rest?"

Gaillard laid a hand on his shoulder. "Don't kneel," he said. "Take her pen out of her hand, lift her up in your arms, and carry her away. She'd go, for that."

Tom stared at him.

"How do you know she would?"

"Women," said the other, rather lamely, turning away, "will do much for a master." He came again to Cleveland. "She's too precious!" said Gaillard fiercely.

Cleveland went back almost in the bravery to do it. And then in her presence the old awe of her power and place among the powers crushed out the intention he had nearly formed of treating her largely as a little girl. He realized without a touch of jealousy that Gaillard might have done it, but he could not interfere.

The time came when the book was almost done. And with it came the

time when Antona seemed the most worn out, the most nervously at tension. Cleveland, coming in one night late after a smoker at the club, saw the light still shining from under her bedroom door, and gently rapped. She was still fully dressed, and had turned toward the door with that momentary poise of a person walking to and fro.

She greeted him with a kind of breathlessness, her face was white and weary and she answered his questions mechanically. No, she was not tired; not sick, no. Just thinking. Oh, yes, Gaillard had come. He had been very amusing. Yes, she was going to bed, but she wasn't sleepy. He stayed with her a little and then went away, his heart constricted with an actual pain. Why couldn't he arrange her life as he would have it—full of happiness and ease? She seemed to be suffering. Was it the fate of creatures gifted even as she to win their greatness by slow drops of blood?

When he saw her at times like these, times that of late had grown perpetual, a great sickening fear that it was all his fault was wont to swallow him. He was a disappointment to her—why, it must be so. Had he not been almost expecting it for long? Perhaps she was starving for the things he had not in himself to give. It might not be her work but himself that was killing her.

As her condition became more grave, so did his torment miserably increase. There was no getting at her inmost heart to see what troubled her, and yet he grew convinced it was not just her work. Down at his office, and on the Street, men noticed his preoccupation, but they had an explanation which, had it reached his ears, would have sent the blood of an honest rage to bursting in his loyal heart. Those who knew him well and those who knew him not at all remembered that Gaillard was his friend.

As gradually the question of his responsibility for her unhappiness came more and more frequently to his mind, his love for her, a very human, craving love, became transfigured with unself-

ishness. In the dark of his room, in the busy city, alone, and on the noisy floor of the Exchange, the cry leaped almost audibly to his lips, "What if I am the cause of her unhappiness?"

One night John Gaillard did not come, nor the next night. And when Cleveland spoke of it regretfully to her she answered with a smile, "Then I can work tonight instead of play!" The pitiful longing came to Cleveland's heart that he might be the one to hold her willingly enthralled before the glowing fire and grinning faces. But only Gaillard could do that, Gaillard with his wonderful, illuminating smile and his quaint, merry humor.

The next day when the man came home in just bare time to dress for dinner, the maid told him that she feared madam was ill; she had remained the whole day in the library and would not eat her luncheon. Cleveland, in the blindness of his terror, dashed up the stairs forgetting he could have reached her quicker by the lift, and knocked at her study door. There was no answer, and he knocked again. A voice unlike his wife's replied at last and he opened the door quite gently and went in. She was sitting at her desk; she had been working madly all the day—he could tell that by the thick disorder of the pages on the desk. She did not turn to look at him. "Well?" she said.

He went around in front of her. "Are you not well, dear heart? They say you will not eat."

"I'm only very busy," she replied. And then he saw her face. It was flushed and her eyes were red and swollen. He remained frozen, staring at her, until she moved a little restlessly.

"I'm not coming down to dinner," she said. "You will excuse me. I could not eat, and this evening if I am undisturbed I can finish the last chapter."

It was so plainly a dismissal that he went softly to the door again. "If Gaillard should come," he ventured, "you do not want to see him?"

She was silent for an instant, and then replied quite slowly but still in the voice so unlike her own, "No; to-night I do not want to see him."

But Gaillard did not come, and Cleveland spent the evening after his lonely dinner in solitary weariness, rent between the anguish of her sorrow and his thankfulness to think the work was nearly done. Tomorrow, yes, he would take her away. He fell asleep finally over a stupid book, and was awakened suddenly by her entrance, an entrance so noiseless that he must have been aroused by her mere presence.

She was standing near the door. He sprang up and went to her.

"I have finished," she said slowly and with great difficulty, and she swayed a little unsteadily. He caught her and took her to his chair.

"My darling, you are faint for want of food. Sit there a moment. I'll get you some wine and tell the man to bring you something hot."

He went, with one last anxious look, hurrying off to serve her in the humble ways he might. When he returned, bringing her brandy in a little glass, he found her lying quite unconscious in the chair.

An hour later, distractedly alert, he faced the physician who had come hurrying to tend her. "An absolute collapse, great strain, probably a long illness, perfect quiet, grave weakness"—the phrases whispered themselves over and over in his mind. While she remained unconscious he himself barely seemed to live.

The first words that she spoke when consciousness returned to her were, "Take the story down." And in the first hour that he left the house he obeyed her. Details of her illness filled the papers. The book that she had almost killed herself to finish, as they had it, had just gone to press, and advance orders for the volume poured in upon her publishers.

Cleveland lived in a kind of racking nervousness through all the long, slow days of her dire illness. His office saw him only for an hour in the day. The

rest of the time he spent, motionless, silent, in a sheltered corner of her bedroom. It worried her, the nurse explained, to see him there, and so his chair was pulled back where he would be hidden by the curtains of her bed, and there he would sit, watching the frail, still hand upon the coverlet.

Still Gaillard did not come!

In the dark, silent room the weary tissues of the woman's body tried feebly to resume their lost vitality. She had become gentle and as docile as a child, taking the frequent food as it was given her without one soft complaint. She seemed to have put by all will and all desires. The sweet-faced girl who nursed her tried to comfort him. It was a tedious thing, at best; it would be weeks before she could be moved, but then, when he could take her away, she would recover rapidly, he might be sure. He could see there was nothing but the great weakness and depression. There was no pain. Ah, yes, that was perhaps worse than actual pain, but she was getting better every day. Why, she could almost lift her hands now—that was a great improvement.

Almost lift her hands! Great heaven, was this his Antona, his wife? He remembered the day so long ago when the team of bays that she had driven in the country ran away with her, and her white round wrists seemed full of steel. And now the very tendons of her arm were like transparent threads of glass—and she could almost lift her hands!

The nurse was right, however; she was growing stronger. Day after day, in all the soothing ease of her still room, poor, slighted Nature labored patiently with her. The time came when she could not only raise her hand, but lift as well the great thick braid of hair that crossed her breast. At last she learned to smile at Cleveland when he came, a wan, faint little smile indeed, but still a thing that made his heart stand still with gratitude.

Still Gaillard did not come!

One day when Cleveland knelt be-

side her bed, she put the hand she had so newly learned to use upon his head, and drew him with a look more than the touch down to her lips. "You are very good to me," she said.

"Oh, Antona, my wife!" The man's heart sobbed upon his kiss.

In these days she bore a little light within the room, and liked to have the nurse read little snatches of her favorite books to her. Cleveland, in these better times, stayed longer at his office, although he telephoned from hour to hour, and sent her flowers every morning to greet her when she woke.

One day on his way home, the thought occurred to him that he had not been inside his club for weeks. A longing for his old familiar friends, a cocktail at the old familiar bar, possessed him, and he went in just for an hour or so to satisfy the double thirst. Men greeted him on every side, for he was well-beloved for the kind, clean gentleman that he was.

Gaillard was not there. He asked for him. There was a momentary awkwardness he hardly noticed, but Burke, good Burke, came to the rescue of the silent group by calling out across the room: "Asking for Gaillard? Thought I heard his name. Funny coincidence. Was just reading a story of his in the March *Clarion*. Anybody seen it? Bully story!" He came across the room and gave the magazine to Cleveland. "Gaillard and you were very thick, weren't you? Funny he didn't let you know he was called home! But you've been so far lost these past few weeks you couldn't be supposed to know much of the outer world. His father is laid low—was in a bad way, I believe. We're all so glad to hear your wife is better."

Cleveland turned the pages of the story. "She is much better now, thanks. It has been pretty tough. I'd like to read this. When's he coming back?"

Burke shrugged his shoulders. "Splendid chap," he said. "And what a gift of words! See, look at this"—he turned a page of the maga-

zine that Cleveland held. "It's a man's letter to a woman he is giving up—could it be better?" He read aloud, using Tom Cleveland as a lecturer:

"The love of you kisses me all the day and all the night. The love of you walks with me and its hand in mine. Oh, dear, desired rose, these things you never did for me. I must go from you or the thought of them will bruise your fragrant petals, and you will droop your lovely head because of me. That must not be, dear love, and so I go. I take my longing in my two hard hands and conquer it—would I could stay with you! Think of me, dear, as one who loved too well not to be wise. 'Love teaches letters to a man unlearned'—love teaches love to love, my love."

There was a little silence in the group. "It is superb," said Cleveland finally. Burke tossed the magazine away. "Here we are all in sentimental gloom. Your first revisit to the club that knows you, and nobody has offered you a drink!" He drew them all away, and so the double thirst was quenched.

True to his promise to himself, Tom did not stay an hour at the club. The men had made him happy, in their glad welcoming, and the thought that soon his dear wife would be quite well enough to go with him to Southern France or Italy or some sweet place in Spain, doubled the measure of a lighter heart than he had known for months. He was met at the house door by a message from his wife—she wanted to see him. Full of brisk repentance for his dallying along the way he hurried to her room. She was waiting for him, he could see.

"The proof has come," she said, with a faint shadow of excitement in her voice. "They have waited until I was better and have sent it all. They want it just as soon as it can be finished; of course they knew we wouldn't bother while I was ill."

The great roll of dingy paper lay beside her on the bed.

"Take it," she said. "Can you begin at once?"

His heart demurred, asking to stay with her a little, but in the conceal-

ment of the curtain the nurse nodded gravely for him to obey.

He saw at once that the excitement of the waiting had been bad for her. He took the roll of paper in his hands, bending to kiss her gently as he did so, and smiled at her. "I'll rush the order, dear," he said, and went away.

No thought of idling, once he had promised her, occurred to him. He went, in the lift, to her own workroom, underneath the eaves as she was used to say, and, lighting the student's lamp, for already the dark had fallen, he undid the roll of sliding, clumsy sheets and, keeping the copy close beside his hand, began his long love-labor. It was hard keeping his mind upon his task, when the story fairly lured him on to read, and every now and then he found he had simply been reading and would have it all to do again.

A gentle knock at the door an hour later interrupted him.

"Dinner is served, sir," said the man.

Cleveland looked far from pleased. "Bring me up something on a tray," he said. "I'm busy."

A sliding noise behind him made him turn his head. The proof was falling in a long cascade upon the floor. "Oh, damn," said Cleveland, jumping to the desk.

He laid the sheets out carefully at length. The last pages only of the book had fallen—the last words that she had written, he thought, and shuddered at the dread suggestion of the words. A sudden prayer of thankfulness leaped from his heart to God. She was not dead! she was not dead!

He lifted the fallen proof-sheets tenderly and sat down to rearrange them in their order. The words on one page suddenly leaped out and struck him in the face.

The love of you kisses me all the day and all the night. The love of you walks with me and its hand in mine. Oh, dear, desired rose, these things you never did for me. I must go from you or the thought of them will bruise your fragrant petals, and you will droop your lovely head because of me. That must not be, dear love, and so I go. I take my longing in my two hard hands and conquer it—would I could stay with you! Think of me, dear, as one who loved too well not to be wise. "Love teaches letters to a man unlearned"—love teaches love to love, my love.



A LONG, LONG TIME

ENGLISH VISITOR—Did you ever know of an American having an old family servant?

AMERICAN HOSTESS—Of course. Why, I have a cook that has been with me for more than a month!



THE SAFE WAY

FOND MOTHER—My daughter is unusually talented. She plays the piano and paints portraits.

ARTIST—Indeed? I would be pleased to hear her play.

TEMPTATION AND THE MAID

By Florence Wilkinson

I N the reflective largeness
Of evening's yellow shore,
Her room all swept and garnished,
There sat one by her door.

An ancient house her neighbor
Stood like some wreck of flame,
With sunken, sightless windows,
Close-shuttered in their shame.

Far in the distance hovered,
Hung in the purple night,
Mysterious, faint and starry,
The City of Delight.

Down the long road of evening,
The ribbon-lying road,
There came a stranger singing
Unto the maid's abode.

Her voice was like the wailing
Of some weird violin;
Her raiment was like sunset
And swathed her to the chin.

She paused upon the portal,
Spake to that lonely one:
"How chill it is and empty
At setting of the sun!"

The lonely one made answer:
"The land is very still
And all night in my chamber
I hear the whippoorwill.

"In this dull house beside me
There seems but little stir,
And yet it hath a tenant—
Oh, the wan look of her!

"But yonder is that City;
All night the street-lamps glow,
And underneath their splendor
The people come and go.

THE SMART SET

"Here in this quiet country
My neighbors are but few,
And they go forth and leave me,
Go forth by two and two.

"Sometimes to sound of weeping
They close and lock the door;
More oft with bugling laughter,
And they return no more.

"Always there comes the stranger
Whose face I cannot see,
And down the dwindling distance
They pass in mystery.

"I, too, await a stranger,
Blowing on flute or fife,
To burst upon my quiet
And call me out to life."

Glittered the starry City,
Trembled the twilight land,
Whereat a touch like silver
Fell on the maiden's hand.

"I am the one awaited;
I come to summon thee
To life and love and knowledge,
A passionate trinity."

The lonely one made answer:
"Thy face is clothed with dusk,
Thy garments smell of burning,
Thy hair of wine and musk.

"Lean down unto me closer
And speak me low thy name.'
The stranger leaned yet closer
Her sleepless eyes of flame.

"Yea, I will lead thee quickly
Unto thy soul's desire.
Thy head shall be anointed,
Thy feet be shod with fire.

"Even so they went aforetime
Who vanished from thy view,
And all within that City
Walk thus by two and two."

The lonely one made answer:
"When I have tired of thee,
Still must thou follow after,
A dogging Memory?"

But hark! upon its hinges
A rusty door makes moan.
In the tall weedy garden
The neighbor walked alone.

She leaned across the twilight
Upon the shattered gate.
Her hair was gray like thistles,
Her voice—how desolate!

"Maiden, her name is Darkness,
And long are her demands.
Her touch hath been upon thee—
Go in and wash thy hands.

"A life ago I listed
The siren voice of her
Whose garments smelled of burning,
Whose hair of wine and myrrh.

"My feet were worn with walking,
She would not let me rest,
And her two eyes unsleeping
Burned holes into my breast.

"I came back to my dwelling,
The dust was on the floor;
And still her shadow sits and sits
Moveless within my door.

"Maiden, her name is Darkness,
And long are her demands.
Her touch hath been upon thee—
Go in and wash thy hands."



A DEFINITION

"MAMA, what is an interregnum?"

"It is the time, my son, after one cook has left, and before another has come to take her place."



"JACKSON is a man of parts."

"I don't doubt it; but how many of the parts are missing?"

PUZZLE

A MAN and a woman once dwelt together in as much mutual love and harmony as we ever expect to see in such cases.

The woman was changeable, unreliable, selfish, deceptive, sincere, extravagant, economical, conventional, startling, and so forth—that is, she was the usual thing.

The man was sober, somewhat dull, hard working and extremely restless, for his curiosity was unsatisfied; and, after they had lived together a year or more, he said to the woman:

"I have been studying you for some time, and I must confess that I do not understand you."

"Keep on trying," said the woman confidently; "maybe you will some day."

So the man sat around for another year, and watched and waited, and was uneasy and pleasant and irritable and morose by turns, and then, his curiosity still unquenched, he came again, and said:

"Do you know, you're as much of an enigma to me as ever? Everything else that I have ever tried to know I have found out, but I'll be hanged if I understand you."

"Don't give up," said the woman, with a perfectly-satisfied-with-herself smile. "Keep up the good work."

And so for another year the man kept it up, and was as full of eagerness as ever. And the woman was simply delighted.

"I have him worried," she said to herself. "All I've got to do is to keep him guessing, and he is mine for keeps."

But about this time the man failed to come around. And then it became the woman's turn to be anxious.

She had a long hunt, but finally she found him.

"Look here," she said, "what's the meaning of this? I just know that I haven't been stupid enough to let you find me out. You don't understand me any better than you did, do you?"

The man smiled indifferently. Even to answer such a question seemed somewhat of a bore.

"Not a bit better," he replied. "But, you see, I have found another woman who is even more of a puzzle to me than you are."

TOM MASSON.



THE TROUBLED INVENTOR

"WHAT was Rusher's last invention?"

"A camera shutter."

"And what is he working on now?"

"A camera that the shutter will work on."

A VENIAL OFFENSE

By Norvell Harrison

“I HAD just money enough to pay my wash-bill,” said the stout woman, the flowers on her red hat shaking impotently as she made the statement, “and the queer creature had a kimono that—well, you never dreamed of anything half so pretty! But I never take any money with me when I’m off by myself. One hears so often of unprotected females being robbed.”

The other nodded. “Someone was telling me only last night,” she affirmed, “about an elevator boy who stopped the car between the twelfth and thirteenth floors and took *everything* from the woman he was carrying up—even her handkerchief, which was lace.”

The amber-haired woman selected a roll from the plate beside her. “I always take my husband when I go off for the summer,” she said; “it’s so much safer.”

I should have liked to inform them both that I had never owned that portable object, a husband, and that I was in the habit of carrying all that I had in the world in a black shopping-bag at my side. Instead, I helped myself to a roll. Until half an hour ago, when the head-waiter showed me to their table, I had never laid eyes upon either of them. Why should I find for them the fallacies in their theories? Then a startling question flashed across my mind. Where was my black shopping-bag? Where had I last seen it?

I sat, for a moment, the roll held in my uplifted hand. Then I pushed back my chair and, making my way hurriedly through the groups scattered

about me in the halls, mounted to the elevated niche of my own room.

Twenty minutes later I sat down on my small white bed—numb, dazed, penniless. Where I had last seen the bag which contained all that I had in the world—whether it was on the train, in the overfilled stage or when I was following a diminutive bell-boy to my diminutive room, I could not, for the life of me, recall. That it would never, in all probability, come within my range of vision again seemed mercilessly certain.

I faced the situation without tears. Women who are accustomed to looking out for themselves early lose the womanly habit of crying.

I had lost every penny I had in the world. My engagement to teach at Hinman Hall did not begin until September. I had taken board at Lyon Lodge for a week, intending to stay eight if the place and the people pleased me, and now my holiday, the first that I had allowed myself for years, was ended before it was fairly begun. Since my father’s death left me, at thirteen, alone and in poverty I had supported myself entirely. Having neither friends nor relations who would reimburse me to the extent of a third of what I had lost, it would be necessary for me to find employment at once.

I walked to the window, and, drawing the curtain aside, looked down upon the people walking to and fro on the lighted lawn. How was I to make money here? My fellow-guests, even the stout woman who had not thought to bring her husband with her, had come from home, without a doubt,

provided with companions of some sort; and nobody wanted their children to be taught in the summer-time. I could advertise myself to read aloud to groups of fancy-work ladies; or I could write up their laundry lists, always a disagreeable task; or I could— Suddenly, born of nothing, out of chaos, my inspiration came to me.

Ten minutes later I was in my landlord's private office.

"A lecture!" he repeated dubiously; "a lecture on China! Well, I don't know. Some of the ladies were talking about getting up a morning eulchre."

"Don't you think they'd lots rather have a lecture?" I protested. "Women like lectures, because they can find out things without taking any trouble themselves. And don't you think," I put the question to him eagerly, "*really*, that it would be much, much *better* for them to have a lecture than to quarrel for hours and hours over a foolish prize?"

My landlord smiled. He had a nice smile. Then he said: "Well, we can try it. I wish you were performing dogs, though, or Indian bead-work; then I'd be sure you'd go." He turned to his desk. "I'll put up an announcement," he added, "along with a notice of your lost pocketbook."

I could have hugged that landlord.

In my own room I sat down with a light and confident heart. I had never lectured before; but people, I had observed, often entered the matrimonial state without ever having been married before. Lecturing, I felt assured, could be no harder than marriage.

The lecture which I had suddenly conceived the idea of giving was one which I had taken down in shorthand in England, when I was thinking of becoming a stenographer—something no girl, who is not exactly plain, ought to think of doing. It was entitled, "The Creed of China," and had been delivered by a Mr. Jacob Ray. I could not be thankful enough that I had transcribed it in my notebook.

Until the hands of my watch

pointed to a quarter of three, I sat poring over my skeletonized Chinese truths. The dawn was breaking before I dropped into a land illuminated by Oriental dreams.

II

I THINK my one Paris gown, donned instead of the *écru* silk, whose years of use and abuse have won for it the glory that is grease and the grandeur that is Roman punch, gave me an added self-possession. Worth makes the man, it is said; he certainly makes the woman. As I walked across the ballroom the next morning in my new role, and mounted the platform reared at one end of it, I was wholly at ease, quite capable of realizing that I had made almost as much money as I had lost. There was a little stand beside me. I laid my notebook upon it and faced my audience.

I had taught; I had been a companion. As I stood there for a moment, before beginning, I asked myself why I had suffered so long in these two callings, when money could be earned so easily simply by talking to a roomful of strangers.

When I first began to speak fear of forgetting one of my carefully learned sentences kept my eyes fixed on a moving fan in the audience. Gradually, however, this feeling vanished, and I began to study in detail the rows of fashionably dressed people before me. The stout woman had come to hear what I had to say about China; so had the amber-haired woman, and a ferret-faced man, whom I had taken to be a jockey in the employ of the woman who accompanied him. There was another man on the other side of this woman, and as my eyes fell on him I was struck by his apparent absorption in what I was saying. Then, suddenly, the words that I was speaking died on my lips, hurled in a second beyond articulate utterance.

The man was Mr. Jacob Ray, author and owner of every sentence which had been issuing from my lips!

For a breathless instant we stared at each other. His eyes, behind his pince-nez, were full of sparkling light, brown, steady in their glance on mine. I don't think I found the statement there; his eyes did not seem to hold it, but in a flash I stood uncovered to my own gaze—a thief!

After what may have been minutes or seconds, I found the words I had dropped, and struggled on with the lecture. But with each sentence I spoke I asked numbly why I had not known before. What deadening of my faculties prevented me from realizing at the outset that, in preparing to deliver Mr. Ray's lecture, I was as guilty as the thief who had abstracted my pocketbook?

Other thoughts, sickening in their force, rushed through my brain. Exposure would come sooner or later. Would it be advisable—nay, possible, for me to remain under the same roof with the man I had robbed?

It was not until I had closed my notebook that I arrived at the answer. As I stood with the pit-a-pat of applause sounding in my ears I told myself that I must leave Lyon Lodge with all possible speed.

A dozen women came forward to meet me as I descended from the platform. They surrounded me with enthusiastic homage; and before I knew it I was being borne, helpless in their midst, into the dining-room.

"I wonder if you could tell me, Miss Hart," said the stout woman, when we were seated, leaning as far over the table as the curves of her figure permitted, "if something I read the other day is true?" She smiled affably. "Do the Chinese worship, actually worship, their queer little chop-sticks?"

"Oh, no!" I said at once.

Above her plaided shoulders I could see Mr. Ray, just sitting down at a table across the room. His profile, turned toward me, showed a well-cut nose, a shaven chin and brown hair above his pince-nez. What thoughts, I wondered, were surging through his outraged brain?

"Of course not," agreed a voice be-

hind the castors; "they worship the man Miss Hart talked so beautifully about this morning. They use their chop-sticks to eat with, for rats and rice, you know, and other Chinese food."

"Rats!" The stout woman shuddered. "Only fancy! Even if they made them up into pies and roasts I should always remember how thin they were, and how their tails looked when they were alive, shouldn't you?" Her look questioned me.

"I could never forget it," I affirmed. China—the China which belonged to Mr. Ray—I felt would never be far distant from my thoughts.

"Why didn't you lecture in costume, Miss Hart?" asked the amber-haired woman.

"It isn't becoming," I hazarded. "It's—oh—it's *quite* unbecoming."

"I have a friend," the stout woman remarked to the table at large, "who visits at Hinman Hall, a big, beautiful home up in the State, and she met there a lady who had lived among the Micmac Indians." The stout woman paused impressively. "She wrote stories about them, how they die and get married," she added, "and she wore their costume. My friend said it was very becoming to her."

"Why, I thought their costumes consisted of a few beads and feathers?" said the amber-haired woman. "Did your friend—?"

I did not stay to hear what variations the stout woman's friend had made upon the Micmac costume. With an unintelligible murmur about having a headache, and wanting to rest, I escaped from the luncheon table.

With feverish haste I began to pack away my Paris gown and hat. The stout woman's friend had stayed at Hinman Hall!—my Hinman Hall, undoubtedly. Was it unlikely that, when Mr. Ray exposed me through her friend, Mrs. Hinman would learn all? No, it would certainly, inevitably happen. My conclusion to leave Lyon Lodge became at once the only possible thing for me to do, my only hope of

escaping detection—of reaching Hinman Hall.

There was no need, I felt, to attempt an interview with Mr. Ray. He would not care to hear that I had lost my pocketbook, nor would he be likely to believe me when I said that I did not know I was stealing when I prepared to deliver his lecture.

It was after I had paid my landlord for a week's board out of my precious ill-gotten gains, and was looking drearily through a time-table, that it occurred to me that in the glance Mr. Ray had cast in my direction as I passed his table I had read no reproach. His eyes had been full of interest—unmistakable, unhidden interest; but in them I could remember detecting no accusation. There was something which, mingled with what looked like admiration for my Paris gown, was so different from, so unlike anything that I should have expected, that I gave up trying to understand it.

III

GROTE BARROW, the place I had selected to spend the seven weeks and six days left of my holiday, was a small, picturesque village tucked away in the Berkshires.

When I engaged my room, the exact replica of the one I had left behind me, my landlord observed that all the Lyon Lodge guests came to him sooner or later.

"They go rambling about from spot to spot, these summer idlers," he explained tolerantly, "stopping here for a view, there for a sip of mineral water, and somewhere else for a house where somebody was born; but they all come here eventually."

I sent up a fervent supplication that nobody would begin a ramble while I was at Grote Barrow, in order to see the house next to the blacksmith's shop where, I was told, a certain famous botanist had first seen the light.

Alas for the prayers of the unrighteous! It was on the third day of my stay that I visited this modest cottage.

On my return I stopped at the post-office, and casting my eyes across the street as I stood for a moment in the narrow doorway, my attention was attracted by a vivid blotch of color, the sphere of a scarlet parasol being waved in midair. A moment later a high-pitched, friendly voice reached me.

"Why, Miss Hart, I never dreamed of seeing you here! Wait a moment. I *must* speak to you."

It was Mrs. Barlow, the stout woman.

I stood, in stony despair, watching her cross the street toward me—the stout woman, she from whom I had fled as from death itself; she whose sociable friend had once stayed at Hinman Hall. Should Mrs. Barlow learn my secret, her friend would certainly tell Mrs. Hinman of my unworthiness to teach the young.

"Have you seen it?" she inquired, when she reached me. Her face had taken on the hue of the parasol.

"Seen what?" I demanded. It didn't matter. Nothing mattered, but that she stood, a crimson rambler, beside me.

"Then you haven't?" She laid a moist, fat hand upon my arm.

"That Ray lecturing man from Lyon Lodge is going to give your lecture here," she announced. "I have just seen the notice hanging up in the library. 'On Friday night, for the Ladies' Aid.'" Her voice swelled with sympathy. "What will you do?" she said. "Tell the police or write to the Government at Washington?"

I felt the ground falling from under my feet. Do? What could I do? Oh, fool that I had been to stop at Grote Barrow!

"I can tell Miss Pettit, the president of the Ladies' Aid," the stout woman suggested kindly. "I happen to know her."

"You must not think of it," I answered. "I—" I halted miserably.

"Well, I can introduce you," she amended, "and you—"

"Oh, no," I protested. "You—you mustn't. I mean I—it isn't necessary." I looked at her desperately. "You see," I hazarded, "it

—why, it really doesn't make any difference." She stared at me incredulously. "Lecturing etiquette is—is so different," I went on stumblingly. "We—we don't feel about things as you do. We—we don't mind them. Besides," I added, brightening, "it may be just the names that are alike. We often do that; it's hard to think up names for them, and lecturers don't bother about it. They just name them the same names over and over."

She looked at me with the look of one who is utterly unconcerned.

"I sat by him that morning at Lyon Lodge," she said, "and he never took his eyes off your face. He had the most curious look, too. And he wasn't just looking at you because you're the kind of girl any man would look at," she added. "He was getting it by heart then, I'll be bound."

I turned and looked up the maple-shaded street.

"You are quite wrong, Mrs. Barlow," I said, trying to speak naturally. "Mr. Ray *has* named his lecture 'The Creed of China,' but anybody who wants to can give a lecture that title." I hesitated. "It—it is probably only a coincidence, and you and I must go our way and think no more about it. We—we will not speak of it, of course," I added.

"But you don't mean," her voice was charged with incredulity, "that you're going to let the Ladies' Aid sit there and listen to that man lecture a lecture that may not be his—that you are not going to do *anything*?"

"There is nothing to do," I asserted. "It—you see it may—it very likely *is* his; and under the circumstances, I must ask you not to speak of it—of what you imagine—to anybody."

We walked up the village street in silence. I could see, as I looked at her furtively, that she was thinking deeply. The scales of my future, I felt, were trembling in her large, moist hands. If she should attend the second delivery of "The Creed of China," my misleading statements would prove quite useless.

The graveled walk leading up to the hotel was bordered with stiff box bushes. As we turned sharply, where two vine-clad summer-houses indicated the front piazza, she leaned forward suddenly.

"Look," she whispered, giving my arm a stinging pinch, "at the head of the side steps! In the brown derby! Oh, the—the traitor! Shall we go up that way?"

By main force I dragged her to the front steps. Mr. Ray stood not two hundred yards from me, leaning against one of the side pillars, his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, his whole attitude indicative of intense abstraction. When we crossed the piazza, however, he saw us and turned; and involuntarily, it seemed, he took a step backward. As his eyes met mine they were filled instantly with a dozen varying emotions, chief among them being that strange look which I had seen in the dining-room at Lyon Lodge. From this look, illuminated by some subtle light which I could not understand, I turned and fled.

Perhaps he had come, like an avenging Nemesis, to mete out to me my deserved punishment. I acknowledged this to myself abjectly in the recesses of my own room. But whether he had or no, I could not flee from Grote Barrow as I had from Lyon Lodge. I must stay within reach of the man Mrs. Barlow suspected, so that, if her suspicion became articulate, I might declare the truth.

It was hard, but I had eaten my cake and I must not complain if its ultimate taste were bitter. It was hard, too, to endure the knowledge that Mr. Ray, a man whom I might have liked under other conditions, felt for me the contempt one feels for a common housebreaker.

His involuntary movement when he saw me unmistakably indicated avoidance.

Mrs. Barlow was across the room from me at luncheon, but as soon as I sat down I was struck by the eager way she seemed to be talking to the

ladies about her. With her elbow ungracefully near her fish plate, she was pouring forth a rapid monologue, and at once I divined the subject of her animated discourse.

My favorite frogs' legs might as well have been chips in paper petticoats. I sat with my eyes fixed on her broad green back. When it retreated finally from the dining-room I mounted once more to my tiny apartment.

Macaulay has said that Bacon's entire life was spent in an attempt to make imperfect man comfortable. If, in the interests of imperfect woman—those of us who are forced to shun the society of our fellow-creatures—he had devoted a little time and thought to the hall bedroom, I feel that he would have carved an abiding monument to himself.

Fear of encountering Mrs. Barlow kept me in my own room. My one chair, designed, apparently, at the time of the Spanish Inquisition, made of attenuated ribs, which struck one in a cowardly fashion where one had no ribs to strike back with, stood, perforce, on a strip of matting which was deluged by a fiery bar of sunshine. Unless I cared to sit on the trunk, I and the sunshine must mingle. When I finally arose, feeling that I was injured to anything, I was scorched, almost sunburned, wretched in body as well as mind.

At the foot of the stairs I met Mrs. Barlow.

"Oh," she exclaimed, stepping back. She fixed me with her sharp little eyes. "Well," she said, "you needn't do anything. He has changed it."

"Who has changed what?" I demanded, marveling at the acceleration of my sphygmie arteries.

"Mr. Ray," she said a little grudgingly. "He's not going to give 'The Creed of China.' He's going to give 'Buddha Out of India' instead."

I stared at her, speechless; then, unexpectedly, I sat down.

"I suppose," she went on, her inquisitive look probing me through and through, "that as soon as he saw you he went to Miss Pettit and changed it.

I've just seen the new notes hanging up in the library."

"I suppose—he did," I answered.

I got up and, walking to the window, looked out upon the procession of nurses and baby-carriages, disporting themselves, the one in white aprons, the other in beribboned parasols. What did it mean?

"Mrs. Barlow," I said, turning back, "you don't understand, of course, what a—what a very uncalled-for thing Mr. Ray has done. But I must beg of you not to speak of this again; to put the idea from your mind that he ever meant to act unfairly. He has done a—a most commendable thing."

She sniffed. "I don't see anything commendable about deciding not to give another person's lecture," she declared. She moved to the door. Then she paused, and turned toward me a face over which a remote, non-committal expression hovered.

"If Miss Pettit were to ask me any questions," she admitted, "I sha'n't hide anything."

But why should Miss Pettit ask her any questions? I went through the evening with a strange fluttering at my heart, a sudden wonderful uplifting. It seemed as if I should really go in the autumn and teach the little Hinman children—should really live with Christine, aged nine, and Peter, aged seven, and Mrs. Hinman, whom I knew I should adore.

But why—why had Mr. Ray changed "The Creed of China" into "Buddha Out of India"? Could the inconceivable be true? *Could* he have done it to shield the girl who had wronged him? If he had he was nobler than any man of whom I had ever heard.

"Do not holler till you are out of the woods" is, perhaps, a homely, but a wise exhortation.

It was while we were watching the clerk sort over the mail, the next morning, standing in a hungry line like paupers waiting for soup tickets, that I caught sight of a woman with Mrs. Barlow, whom I had not noticed before.

Whether her face or her costume betrayed her, or whether it was merely an instance of the prescience of guilt, I do not know, but in a flash I divined her identity.

I experienced no surprise when, upon attaching myself to their short brown skirts, Mrs. Barlow introduced her as Miss Pettit.

"We are going to walk to Hanging Rock," she announced. "That's why we got these skirts out from the bottoms of our trunks."

I said at once that I would go, too. They did not want me. I could see the unhospitable fact written all over Mrs. Barlow's expansive face. But I knew, with a knowledge that made me reckless, that I must, at any cost, prevent a tête-à-tête between them.

Hitherto, in my rare visits to summer resorts, I had strenuously avoided those sightseeing bands who, with drinking-cups and field-glasses, go forth to unearth Hanging Rock or Serpent's Circle, whichever happens to be at hand. The walk which led to this particular Hanging Rock was one which any self-respecting chimpanzee would have scorned to take. I, whose tastes were like the chimpanzee's, followed it to the bitter, briary end.

When we returned to the hotel I sat upon the piazza with them. Mr. Ray was not to be seen, and I was just beginning to wonder if I might dare to hope, when a bell-boy approached me suddenly and informed me that I was wanted at the telephone.

As I arose I gave Mrs. Barlow one look—despair, command, entreaty commingled. It would have melted a heart of stone. Yet when I returned to the piazza, after hearing the landlord at Lyon Lodge regret that he had been unable to trace my pocketbook, I felt not the slightest surprise to find no sign of the two women I had left on the green divan.

The gathering clouds had begun to drip a slow, steady drizzle before I caught sight of a scarlet parasol hurrying up the box-bordered walk. As it came nearer I saw that from another direction Mr. Ray was coming

to the hotel. I watched tensely to see what would happen when the meeting occurred. Near the door of the summer-house Mrs. Barlow paused and held out to him a large lavender envelope. A bell-boy crossed the lawn near him a moment later. Mr. Ray lifted his head from the lavender sheet.

"Can't you go down to the village," he said, "and tell Miss Pettit that I—that Mr. Ray will call upon her this afternoon—late?"

With the blood pounding in my head, I walked to the top of the steps.

"And tell her, please," I said, trying to keep my voice steady, "that Miss Hart will come to see her this afternoon—early."

I wondered, as I went upstairs, what Mr. Ray thought of what I had done. There was, of course, no doubt now as to what I meant to do. I must see Miss Pettit at once and tell her the truth. I got out my raincoat drearily. As I rummaged in my trunk for my thickest boots I said good-bye to Hinman Hall—to Christine, aged nine, and Peter, aged seven, and the garden and the mountains, and the idea of having a place which I could call home.

The hotel grounds were deserted as I unfurled my umbrella; but as I stepped upon the pavement I heard a step behind me. I did not turn. Misery, when it springs from self-abasement, does not seek society. A voice, however, broke the swishing sound of the rain.

"It's raining very hard, Miss Hart," it said. "I wonder if I could deliver your message to Miss Pettit for you. I—I am afraid you're going to get frightfully wet."

I turned. Mr. Ray, mackintoshless, his face glowing, his eyes behind their pince-nez shining, stood beside me a little out of breath.

I did not stop to consider whether he had really come to help me. I collapsed entirely.

"I do not know what Miss Pettit wrote you, Mr. Ray," I said tremulously, "but I am going now to tell her the truth. I do not care about get-

ting wet, of course. I ought to have told her before, but——"

The wind wrenched my umbrella from my grasp. He put out his hand and took it.

"I thought you were going to tell her the truth," he said, "and it occurred to me that I ought to be present when you told."

I faced his look with my heart sinking into the toe of my boots.

"You will not believe me," I spoke desperately, "but at the time I did not know I was—was doing wrong."

How trite, how untrue the words sounded!

"I took your lecture down in shorthand notes three years ago, and that night at Lyon Lodge I—I learned it."

"Took *my* lecture down—in shorthand notes!" he repeated. There was unexpected surprise in his face and voice. "But— isn't the lecture yours?" he asked.

In turn, I stared at him aghast.

"Isn't it mine?" I repeated. "Why, how could——?"

"It must be somebody's," he reminded me. His eyes traveled slowly from my face to the hand holding the umbrella and back to my face again. "And it isn't mine, you know," he said.

I let go the handle of the umbrella. The ground seemed suddenly slipping beneath my feet.

"The fact is," he went on, "I was quite sure it was yours. I found it—found the manuscript, I mean—nicely typed in full in a small railway station in Germany—in the waiting-room on a very dirty seat. You did not leave it there? It was unsigned; but for the past few days I have imagined, quite naturally, I think, that it must belong to you."

There was a butcher's awning close beside me, and unconsciously I stepped beneath its shelter. He followed, the lowered umbrella trailing a stream of raindrops behind us. As he leaned it against the door-post, resting his own brown shoulders further up on the discolored wood, his eyes met mine and he laughed—an absolutely sincere, contagious laugh. I did not join in his

mirth. However, it seemed to me, as I stood looking dazedly into the steady gray downpour, as if the world in which I had been living for the past four days had vanished suddenly, whirled away all at once, leaving me in a strange, utterly unknown sphere, facing conditions which I could not quite grasp.

"I am afraid you have dwelt too much on the ethics of the situation, Miss Hart," he observed in a voice which plainly indicated that he had not dwelt upon them at all. "To me there has been an element of danger, a pleasurable excitement about delivering another man's lecture; a—a something which has made me akin to the soldier on the battlefield. But I cannot quite realize yet that the lecture is not yours. I have been so *sure* that it was."

"Excitement!" I gasped, clutching at the word. His idea of pleasurable excitement was certainly wildly different from mine.

He nodded. "It was quite by accident," he explained, "that I came to deliver the lecture at all." His eyes behind their pince-nez sparkled illuminatingly. "I had only one lecture—a talk on life in the English schools"—he moved a little so the raindrops could not reach him—"compiled from a copy of 'Tom Brown' which I happened to have with me when I ran away from home. But I found 'The Creed'; and afterward the president of something asked me to speak before her club. There was manifestly nothing for me to do but deliver 'The Creed.' Since then," he added, "I have decided that it was unnecessary to give it up."

In a quick rush of words I told the story of my own suffering for the past few days. "But suppose the real owner should hear you," I said, speaking with fervor; "should be in your audience! Oh, you don't know how dreadful it is—you can't think what I have endured thinking—believing that you—that I——"

"Have you?" he asked. His eyes were suddenly full of pity. "I am so sorry." His voice showed that he

was very sorry. "I shall hope," he added, "that it will be I who will have the luck to lecture before the real owner—I, lecturing in Japan, shall we say, while you in Indian Territory are delivering——"

"I do not expect ever to lecture again," I told him convincingly. It came over me with a rush how much I was to lose by my adoption of "The Creed," for the necessity of explaining my claim to the lecture had not vanished. If I had not wronged Mr. Ray I had wronged myself, and must bear the penalty. Miss Pettit must yet be told whether I had taken the lecture from Mr. Ray or he had taken it from me.

"I have lost everything by delivering it once," I said, my voice faltering a little in spite of myself. "I was to teach next year at the loveliest place." The tears, I could feel, were not far away. "I never wanted to go anywhere so much in my life as I wanted to go to Hinman Hall. But I shall have to tell Miss Pettit that I took the lecture from you, and——"

"Do you mean that you are going to Hinman Hall, to teach Peter and Christine?" he asked in an incredulous voice.

"Yes," I said, amazed. "Do you know them?"

He left the door of the butcher shop and walked to where the awning flapped a steady stream of raindrops into the gutter, his hands disappearing into his trousers pockets.

"I don't blame you for wanting to teach them," he observed presently over his shoulder as my fascinated gaze dwelt on the broad expanse of his back. "They are uncommonly nice little kids. Christine wears knickerbockers like a boy, and they can both tell the time of day by the sun." He turned toward me. "You'll like the woods, too, Miss Hart," he went on enthusiastically. "Back of the house there is a

mountain where we have picnics. Once we caught a little brown bear up there. Are you afraid of bears, Miss Hart? I—I don't believe you are."

I felt utterly unable to speak. That Mr. Ray knew my Mrs. Hinman seemed too unbelievable to be true. Had the age of miracles returned?

"You don't understand, Mr. Ray." I spoke wretchedly. "Mrs. Barlow knows a lady who knows Mrs. Hinman, and when——when Mrs. Hinman knows, when——"

"When Mrs. Hinman knows," he interrupted, "I shall tell her; for she is the sort of sister one tells things to——"

"Sister!" Weakly I caught at the rope dangling from the awning.

"A very strange sister," he returned. He came close to my side. "Do you know, Miss Hart," he said reflectively, looking into my eyes with eyes that sparkled continually, "she is depraved enough to say she would enjoy delivering somebody else's lecture? It was she to whom I first wrote of it, after my second debut in the lecturing field. Indeed, it was she who first suggested my lecturing on Tom Brown. When she knows about you——" he hesitated. I could almost hear the hurried beat of my heart—"she will take you by the hand, I think, Miss Hart, and ask you to teach Peter and Christine how to be plucky. Nora likes pluck, Miss Hart. So——so do I."

I left my place beside the discolored doorstep and, walking to the edge of the rain-swept sidewalk, turned my face to the hurrying gale.

"Isn't there some biblical story," I asked presently, not turning, "about people's not doing evil that good may come of it? Didn't Joseph, Mr. Ray——?"

"Oh, but we have no time to talk of Joseph," he interrupted, coming quite close to me once more. "We haven't decided yet what it will be best to tell Miss Pettit," he reminded me.

MANY an idealist at twenty is a realist at twenty-one.

A MARCH SONG

MULVANEY, Murphy, Rooney,
 Mulcahy, Hughes, O'Toole;
 Mack, Moriarity, Mooney,
 O'Callahan, McCoolle;
 O'Shaughnessy, McAuliffe,
 Fitzsimmons, Dowd, Drumgoole;

McGuffey, Keefe, O'Leary,
 McGonigle, McVey,
 McGill, O'Connell, Geary,
 O'Kelly, Finn, O'Shay;
 O'Rourke, Muldoon, Mullaly,
 McClellan, Curry, Fay;

Delaney, Killen, Brady,
 Muldowney, Monahan;
 O'Donovan, O'Grady—
 Oh, see them march, a clan
 In honor of St. Patrick,
 Who was a gentleman!

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



VERY SIMPLE

THE INGENUOUS ONE—I wonder how Isabel manages to preserve her complexion.

THE KNOWING ONE—Oh, she just keeps it in a cool place, tightly corked.



THEIR PROPER NAMES

“PA, the first Sunday of the month is foreign-mission Sunday at our Sunday school, and the third Sunday is home-mission Sunday; what are the other two?”

“Intermission and omission, I guess.”

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED SIXTY-AND-NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON SHEM, ON THE LATTER'S TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY

By Gelett Burgess

MY son, incline thine ear unto my word, and give heed unto my precepts; for the time is at hand when the women shall say: Lo, a new youth cometh, and he is tender withal, let us therefore work him.

2 For she knoweth thy ways that they are vain; she remembereth thy follies; *thou canst not fool her.*

3 Not by their strength do men prevail over women to have their way; but obstinacy and persistence win their reward.

4 ¶As a sofa pillow which sheddeth its feathers, so is she who asketh alway: *Why desirest thou to kiss me?* And a teasing woman is like unto a dog with hair that leapeth continually upon thee.

5 As fly paper to the bare feet, or as when one wipeth his hands upon a new towel, so is she who asketh thee continually: *Dost thou love me?*

6 Gum may be removed from the hair, and ink under the thumb-nail will in time pass away; but she who talketh loudly in the street-car cannot be changed.

7 Like hot coffee after a sleigh-ride, so is she who asketh not troublesome questions.

8 ¶The education of a fair damsel is pleasant, yea, it rejoiceth the heart of man to give her counsel and to teach her.

9 A maiden's first kiss cometh hard; it is as the first olive out of the bottle, requiring much skill; but the rest are easy.

10 To be two years a widow exceedeth a college education; and a woman without brothers hath a hard time.

11 A wise maiden scenteth trouble afar, and avoideth a scene; but the foolish virgin exclaimeth: *Don't!*

12 ¶Son, if a maiden love thee, these be the *signs* whereby she shall show unto thee her heart; she shall make plain her ways that thou canst know her and be wise:

13 Thou shalt appear handsome in her sight; she shall praise thine eyes and the corners of thy mouth, yea, she shall admire thy hands. Though thou art even as the ourang-outang, yet shall she paint thee with fancies.

14 She shall be easy of access; she shall accept all thine invitations; she shall have time in plenty for thee.

15 She shall show thee her new raiment and ask thy judgment; and the gown thou approvest not, she will not wear it.

16 She shall ask thee of thy mother, and thy sister; she shall demand a picture of thy childhood.

17 She shall read the books that thou readest, studying thy taste; she shall know thy color and thy song.

18 She shall remember the sugar in thy tea, and the lamb chop thou despisest, she will not offer thee.

19 She shall pick threads from thy garment, she shall brush thy hair.

20 She shall remember when thou first met her; she shall know when last thou calledst.

21 She shall laugh at thy jests; she

shall heed thine opinions, *quoting them to her friends.*

22 She shall know thy neckties, she shall refuse thee *a mustache*, with bitter tears.

23 She shall give thee foolish gifts, and shall know if thou useth them not.

24 She shall read thy letters even when they be cold; she shall know thy step outside the door.

25 ¶Son, when thou art old, it will please thee more to remember the duties thou hast neglected *for love of women*, than all thine honors.

26 The bachelor thinketh he understandeth women, knowing something of many, and the husband is wise in his own conceit, knowing much of one; but a woman holdeth them equal in folly and smileth to her sisters.

27 As one who dippeth the mucilage brush in the ink-bottle, so is he who saith: Behold, my love, how young thou lookest *today*, and how well thou appearest.

28 For a woman searcheth a compliment as she examineth a new garment; she turneth it inside out, she regardeth the stitches.

29 ¶Who is more aged than the maiden of *three-and-twenty*? Lo, she scorneth the world, she writeth in her journal, she spitteth the ashes of joy from her mouth, she talketh wisely to the old men and scorneth babes; she goeth into social settlements.

30 Yet in another year she returneth to embroidered underwear, she danceth the two-step with ardor; she writeth many letters.

31 And these are the signs of her aging: when she enjoyeth not all people, when she scanneth the mirror in the morning, when she seeketh the callow youth of the land, to enslave them.

32 ¶It is naught, it is naught: saith the young damsel; but *when he is gone*, she fieth to the looking-glass and rejoiceth in her comeliness.

33 ¶Now there were three damsels, sitting upon three chairs, and each damsel had a youth beside her; at the theatre they sat in couples, two and two and two;

34 And lo, each young man laid his arm along the back of his own damsel's seat, privily; and each damsel observed his act, keeping her counsel.

35 And I watched them; out of the corners of my eyes I regarded their acts, and great was my joy.

36 For the first damsel waxed wroth at her youth's impertinence, and *she leaned back*, heavily; with her eyes she darted fierce glances at him. And he withdrew his arm.

37 But the second damsel rejoiced at her youth's ardor, and she leaned back, nestling in comfort against his arm. And the youth smiled and kept his place.

38 And the third damsel made no sign, sitting with great stiffness throughout the performance. For she knew not whether to be pleased or to wax wroth.

39 And the name of the damsel was Hugabel; which is to say, *one without experience.*

40 ¶How wondrous is a woman's conscience; and with what pride she vaunteth her virtues;

41 Saying: Lo, *I ought not* to tell thee this thing, nor should I divulge her secret; *but thou understandest.*

42 When her friend cometh with tidings she receiveth her with joy, saying: Thou knowest that I eschew gossip, neither do I talk mischievously concerning my neighbor; therefore tell me thy news, and I shall not believe it.

43 ¶I have heard engaged maidens, when they said concerning their past lovers: yea, I thought *at the time* that I loved him, but I was mistaken.

44 And many a damsel hath recommended a man to her sister, whom she would in no wise be persuaded to marry herself.

45 ¶My son, there are subjective kisses, and kisses objective; there are kisses seen and disgustable and kisses felt and rapturous; but the glory of the subjective is one's, and the shame of the objective is another's.

46 Lo, every man judgeth a woman by his own experience alway; for if she consenteth he sayeth: Lo, so doth she with *every* one; but if she refuseth him he sayeth: Behold, *she is inaccessible.*

47 Not by men are women betrayed, but by women are they taught indiscretion. Doth a maid smoke her first cigarette because a man asketh? Nay, yet at the dove lunch she taketh her first step, lest her sisters scorn her.

48 For a prude amongst froward women is a sport; but a sport amongst prudes, her ways are seemly.

49 ¶I say unto thee, not by embraces and honied words doth a woman measure a man's love, but by every deed he doeth.

50 She is sensitive to his approaches, she watcheth his advance, saying: Lo, he hath touched my glove, he hath fondled my parasol; his love progresseth. Next will he examine my rings, and discourse of palmistry. Mine eyes are opened.

51 Her ways are devious and full of guile; yet when she taketh the straight road and speaketh her mind, she is reproved for her frankness.

52 ¶A rich orphan lacketh not a suitor; and at the bargain counter there are no veils found.



A CONFESSION OF POVERTY

THE weary millionaire leaned his aching forehead on his hand, and groaned with the intolerable pain of defeat. There were tears in his eyes, his voice shook, and deep distress lined his face.

"I do not understand the courts," he sighed; "I do not. Is it possible that there is one law for the poor, and another for the rich? The foul suspicion fills me with loathing! And yet—and yet—what am I to think?"

His faithful wife stroked his hair, or where it should have been, with trustful courage.

"Do not despair, John Dollars," she said hopefully. "Do not give up so. It breaks my heart to see you thus cast down. Remember, darling, that we still have each other and all the luxuries and necessities of this life, and perchance we can struggle on without anything else until brighter times. There must be justice in heaven."

"Justice!" cried the millionaire bitterly, starting to his feet and striding wildly to and fro. "Talk not to me of justice, woman! Our mergers dissolved, our contracts made public, our trusts threatened—and yet you ask me to believe in justice!"

"D-d-don't, d-d-dearest, d-d-don't talk like that," sobbed the true wife, hanging imploringly upon his arm, her heart torn by his agony.

"The judges are catering to the plain people; they think more of the Republic than they do of us; they'd rather be right than rich!" continued the distraught millionaire, heedless of his wife's tears.

Such an honest avowal filled the devoted wife with a nameless dread. "You don't mean—you can't mean—?" she gasped, her anguished eyes demanding the whole fearful secret.

"I do," asserted the tortured millionaire, with solemn brutality. "As true as there is money in inflating values, I do mean that I do not own the courts!"

At these dreadful words the stricken woman fell fainting upon the \$15,000 prayer-rug; and, as the millionaire strove desperately to bring her to by dousing her from a flask of attar of roses, he temporarily forgot the depths of poverty he had just confessed.

ALEX. RICKETTS.

THE ONE GOOD GIFT

By Clinton Dangerfield

“**H**OW could I suspect that you would make it—like this?” said Barrington slowly.

Under the library table his fingers involuntarily locked themselves around the gloves he had just taken off, crushing them into a shapeless ball.

The old man sitting opposite let a faint, pleased smile flicker lightly at the corners of his satirical mouth. He marked the stormy rise and fall of the young man's chest as he answered complacently:

“You are a trifle hard to please. By the way, how is your brother?”

“Better, thank God.”

“Indeed? Well, I see that a professor has come out with the pithy argument that all defective human beings, such, for instance, as this crippled brother of yours, should be quietly extinguished, to the benefit of themselves and those responsible for them.”

“There have always been brutes to advocate such theories,” returned Barrington contemptuously.

“Ah, you evidently disagree with him. But permit me to observe that calling a man a brute does not refute his theory. You cultivate a style of argument which expresses the emotions, but scarcely the intellect.”

“I don't want to discuss your professor,” said Barrington shortly.

“No? Perhaps you are thinking of the horse you have recently been riding. You ride hard, my head groom tells me. I suppose you enjoy it?”

“Mr. Coilford,” said Barrington desperately, “I am not here to discuss horses. I asked for this interview because I am going to stoop to something

I never thought to do. I am here to beg for mercy.”

“For mercy? You astonish me, I assure you.”

“For God's sake, Mr. Coilford, be a little easier on me!”

“Easier on you? Don't you sit at my right hand? Haven't you been, for six months, my perpetual guest of honor?”

“Your perpetual guest of dishonor!”

“Ah! Now I thought dishonor lay in crime—embezzling, say, or murder. But you have done nothing worse than break through a few canons of good form.”

Barrington writhed where he sat, as though scorched by intolerable recollections. The old man went on:

“I believe it was in our bond that I was never to ask you to violate the law. Have I?”

“Not the civil law,” said the other fiercely, throwing the ruined gauntlets on the table as though he strove to cast unbearable memories with them. “Not the civil law. But you have forced me to break unwritten codes until I have literally ground my own self-respect under my heel.”

“Come, come, you take life too seriously, too dramatically. When you sold yourself to me—and don't think I use the term in a stagy sense; my power is limited and I'm quite willing it should be—when you sold yourself to me for two years, didn't I fulfil my share of the bargain as concerns your brother?”

The misery in Barrington's eyes softened a little.

“I don't deny it; and if I have saved him——”

"You will congratulate yourself, having not yet learned that a relative always means a burden. Now in return for placing this boy under world-famous surgeons in Paris, I exacted from you a virtual sale of yourself for two years. Not from any serious motive—I am old, I weary of things, and I need—amusement."

At the last word Barrington sprang up and paced the wide rug, his long strides showing the supple promise of strength in his finely proportioned figure. His dark brown eyes deepened into black with anger, his face burned scarlet; but he held his peace.

"Instead of a guest," resumed Coilford, "other men might have compelled you to be a servant in the stable——"

"Let me go to the stable. Ten thousand times rather the most menial service than——"

"But I," interrupted the old man, "have given you the highest position among my guests. And they are interesting people—take Elise Edwards, for example."

Barrington halted abruptly.

"If you would only wait until *she* is gone," he said brokenly, "I could stand the others. I don't care much what they think of me."

Coilford pressed his finger-tips delicately together as though he were trying to repress by his benign attitude a grieved surprise.

"You want Miss Edwards to go, it appears? I had heard, from seemingly reliable sources, that she represented your—what shall I call it?—ideal. Hence my invitation to her."

Barrington flung up his head, his handsome face blazed with indignation, his eyes flashed.

"You knew I loved her, then! And you dared to ask her here to witness my—that is why you— Oh, it is infamous!"

"Assuredly, I must have supposed you would desire her among us," interrupted Coilford smoothly. "Haven't I given you every opportunity to see each other? She may have criticized you——"

The fire died from the other man's eyes. A hard composure, soon to settle into his habitual masque of apparent calm, blotted all emotion from his face.

"She could not do otherwise than criticize me."

"Perhaps not. But when anyone does remark on your—er—let us say *faux pas*; 'breaks' sounds so crude—when people do remark on these, I always defend you."

"Such a defense," said Barrington scornfully, "as the——"

"Hold on, my dear fellow; you are about to say something ill-considered. Besides, if you don't like my house there's a ready way out of it. Your position is easily remedied."

"Remedied?" Again Barrington's masque gave way. Hope lighted his eyes, to the infinite delight of his companion, who went on suavely:

"Why not? When I first came to you I found you and your brother in a squalid lodging-house. Your wages as a clerk—you are not a very capable clerk—had not sufficed to pay his numerous bills nor to feed you both decently. Those lodgings were a contrast to the luxury in which you were born. Odd you should have lost your fortune, or, rather, that your father, John Barrington, should have lost it for you. He was very anxious to keep it, he never drank nor gambled, yet ill fortune pursued your house. At your father's death you found yourself a beggar, and your brother dying by inches for lack of proper surgery. Well, I rescued him—taking your paper in exchange—paper not worth a straw commercially."

Barrington flung himself back into his chair.

"All this is foreign to the matter," he said impatiently.

"I think not. I resume: You said, when I discovered you, that you had but two possessions left, your honor and your life."

"It is all that I have now," returned Barrington gloomily.

"Well, these two possessions are negotiable for your purpose. You

could readily escape my society by a leap in the dark. But a certain prejudice exists nowadays against 'the open door,' vulgarly called suicide. The other remedy is far simpler and in common practice. You have sworn to keep faith with me—break it."

"You give me permission—?" began Barrington joyously; but Coilford cut him short.

"I give you no permission. I shall hold you to the last fraction of the time for which I bargained. But the leash is a slender one—your word."

Barrington rose quietly.

"We seem to have wasted an hour in a very useless discussion," he said calmly. "And so, if you have no present orders for me, Mr. Coilford, I shall go to my room."

"As you like; but please don't forget we have a dinner on tonight—several new guests—our house party needs expanding."

Barrington's hand clenched over the door-knob.

"For tonight at least—" he burst out vehemently, then as suddenly checked himself, as though comprehending the futility of appeal, and went away.

That night Barrington sat, as usual, on his host's right, looking directly into the lovely face of Miss Edwards, who occupied Coilford's left.

Miss Edwards's thoughts were full of her vis-à-vis, whom she had rejected two years before in Europe, just before his father's death. Each ensuing month taught her that she had made a great mistake, and so when Coilford's invitation reached her she rejoiced in the chance to rewin the man whom in truth she had never lost. In all seeming kindness Coilford had thrown them constantly together. His "experiments" had not begun when Elise first came, but no sooner had the mystic and wordless understanding which often lies between lovers developed for these two than there also began a series of heartbreaking surprises for Miss Edwards.

Barrington had offered an abso-

lutely unjustifiable discourtesy to one of the women, and this discourtesy had been followed by one piece of churlishness after another, in odious and vulgar succession, done by Barrington with deliberate self-possession and a masque-like immobility of face. Scathing comments from the other guests naturally ensued. These Barrington never resented, bearing them with an apathy which Elise found as amazing as his fall from grace.

Tonight she studied him with puzzled eyes. The reserve and dignity of his bearing, the well-bred repose of his face, his whole attitude through the dinner made it seem as though his curious and detestable lapses must have been a hateful dream.

When the women rose from the table to leave the men to their wine, Elise told herself, in great relief, that nothing would go amiss this evening. She cast a prettily coquettish glance at Barrington as he stood, waiting for her to pass through the doorway, feeling confident that, for the present at least, she would suffer no vicarious shame for him. But Barrington himself had learned too well to interpret his master's moods. He felt the gathering venom, invisible as yet.

When he returned to his post of honor, his whole mind still filled with a vision of Elise's appealingly lovely face, he was scarcely seated before Coilford pressed on him a glass of wine.

He drank, though another glass bored him. He had always been indifferent to stimulants, in spite of the fact that his father's cellar had once been famous.

The emptied glass was refilled. As he poured the wine for his guest, Coilford leaned easily toward him and breathed rather than whispered a command. Barrington's hand involuntarily left the stem of his wineglass. He sickened with a repulsion that made him physically ill against the prospect before him. A helot with his reason gone, capable in his silly madness of any act of folly! Where might not fancy lead him? He saw himself reeling before Elise, clutching at her

gown, and a shudder ran through him. Then he gathered himself desperately together, and as he did so one saving idea came to him, his solitary avenue of escape. He would drink so swiftly and steadily that he should sink into stupid unconsciousness, so defeating some part at least of Coilford's intentions.

As he began to swallow glass after glass with feverish eagerness his eyes caught the highly disapproving glance of an Episcopal bishop who had occupied Elise's left. The bishop was, by disposition, an epicure, and Coilford observed with keen delight the pain which Barrington's crude manner of drinking gave the churchman. To gulp wine like whisky was unpardonable in the bishop's eyes.

Indirectly encouraged by Coilford, his forehead took on a very Episcopal frown, which Barrington tolerated with a grim sense of the warning's absolute futility, since Coilford's softly breathed edict controlled the situation. More than one of the men talked at random, covertly watching the guest of honor, and whispering among themselves that this new departure might very well have been expected.

As he drank, Barrington felt the biting contempt in the atmosphere; but it only drove him to refill his glass the more swiftly. He felt a certain bitter pleasure in the belief that he was, for once, about to outwit Coilford. But his fine physique refused to yield completely to the stupefying doses. Reason indeed slipped from his troubled brain; but he still sat erect, haunted vaguely by an indefinable knowledge of something wrong. In his swimming vision a hazy mist invested everything. The faces at table seemed to melt or blur into this. Then suddenly, out of this cloudiness, swam clearly the face of the observant bishop, distinctly and irritatingly critical.

Then Barrington felt sure that it was not the bishop. It was Coilford, who had suffered a momentary change into priestly proportions. Yes, he was right; that sneer was unquestionably

Coilford's. The primeval instinct of self-preservation stirred sharply in Barrington's bewildered intellect, telling him that something must be done—immediately. With all the force of his steely wrist he threw his last measure of wine straight into the face which was so evidently Coilford's—yet which somehow started up an enraged and empurpled bishop, a bishop quite forgetful of the injunction to turn the other cheek!

When Coilford woke the next morning, he signified the fact by a gentle chuckle. He was recalling the scene of the night before with the keenest enjoyment. As his valet approached he yawned and sat up in bed; his bright old eyes as free from any rheumy touch of sleep as the unwinking eyes of a snake.

"Robins, what time is it?"

"Half-past eleven, sir."

"Is Mr. Barrington up?"

"Yes, sir. He was up by nine, sir. He had a splittin' headache and I advised brandy-and-soda; but he went for a walk instead."

"You are well qualified to advise on such subjects," returned his master drily. "Kindly bear in mind that you are not to copy Mr. Barrington's ways. You've been drunk twice in my service. The third time you go."

Breakfast over, Coilford sought his usual haunt, the library. He was surprised to find Elise Edwards evidently waiting there for him. His surprise increased decidedly when that young lady attacked him bravely, all her womanly courage shining from her sweet and courageous blue eyes.

"I've found out what you are doing to Mr. Barrington," she announced defiantly.

"Indeed!" said Coilford, gazing keenly at her and nearly thrown off his guard. Had Barrington broken his word at last? "Suppose you explain?" he said coolly.

"Oh, I'll explain," retorted Elise bitterly, drawing closer. "You are—a wicked—old—hypnotist! Oh, you needn't stare! You've been hypno-

tizing Mr. Barrington. Since he's been doing these horrid things he's what papa calls 'dual'."

Coilford listened and made his next move with the confident brilliance of a finished chess-player when matched against a novice. He took Miss Edwards's hand.

"Dear young lady," he said gently, "how excellent in you to defend a friend! I am so glad you have spoken frankly. I see that this change in Mr. Barrington grieves you as it does me. But if anyone is hypnotizing him, and I assure you I have no talent that way, we must find the truth. To that end I'll have him summoned, and while you are alone with him here I want you to use all your woman's wit in discovering whether any influence drives him to these shocking acts of his—such woefully ill-bred fancies!"

Abashed by Coilford's frankness, Elise hung her head; but she did not refuse the proffered opportunity, and when Barrington entered they were apparently alone. Neither of them could have detected the noiseless opening of a door leading into a curtained niche, where Coilford now sat, darkly hopeful.

Barrington halted, with a faint touch of confusion.

"I thought Mr. Coilford was here?"

"No, I sent for you. I—I wanted five minutes of your time."

He bowed gravely and waited.

"Oh, why do you stand there like that? How can you be so composed? Have you forgotten already?"

"What is it that I should remember?"

"Last night—what happened then."

"I was drunk last night. Consequently my recollections are rather hazy."

Elise shrank at the brutality of the words. The gesture cut her lover like a knife; but he told himself that he would indeed be a brute if he permitted her to feel any further interest in him. Disgraced and humiliated as he was, there could be nothing in common between them.

Elise found her voice.

"Oh, can you speak of it like that! Don't you care? Do you know that you—you threw wine in the bishop's face?"

"So I am told."

"Don't you understand that only a coward strikes a priest?"

Barrington's face, already pale from the night's indulgence, went deadly white; but he said nothing.

Miss Edwards drew near to him, her eyes swimming in tears.

"I am going to ask you something. And oh, please answer me truthfully. Have you ever allowed anyone to hypnotize you?"

"No."

She laid her hand on his arm; the contact thrilled him like fire.

"These strange things you do, this terrible sinking into something which has no shame—is it of your own free will?"

Coilford, his shrewd eyes gleaming wickedly through the curtains, felt that his victory was near, for he saw Barrington actually sway as though he were struggling with a power too strong for him, a force able to overthrow him mentally and physically.

The young man's arms had been folded. They now dropped to his side, and Coilford saw the unconscious fingers unclose and quiver with the tempest rending the internal man. Cold sweat stood in drops on Barrington's brow, and Elise might have read an almost infinite anguish in his honest eyes. But she saw only that the lines in his face were set like carven stone, and heard only the coldness in his voice as he said harshly, through set teeth:

"All I have done, all I may do, Miss Edwards, is the result of my own free will."

She felt the truth in his words. Her hypnotic theory dropped from her like a discarded garment. Yet she made a last gallant effort.

"Then, since it's yourself—your baser self—that's dragging you down—won't you let me—try—to help you?"

Barrington tried to speak again,

but could not. He had all the agony of one absolutely at bay, without the forlorn courage which generally animates that position. Like the goaded bull in the arena, it seemed to him that no one approached except to drive a barb into his side; but unlike the bull he could hope for no *coup de grâce* from a merciful sword. After all, a longer keeping of his word was a mere splitting of hairs, a sentimental folly which he could sweep aside like the cobweb it was. He would crush this exquisite woman in his arms and tell her all. She would know how to comfort him with tactful sympathy and, his faith broken, they would leave Coilford Manor together.

"His faith broken!" His own thought arose and sung itself bitterly at him. No—if his endurance kept him eternally in the borders of this anguished hell he would keep that one good gift whole. His blind trust in rectitude still lived, though his other possession, life, had long ceased to seem of value.

Again he tried, and now his voice obeyed him. Its rough and broken tones sounded so savagely unlike his own that he did not wonder that Elise shivered as he said slowly:

"You are most kind, Miss Edwards—but you can't save a man—from himself."

She darted one look at him and was gone; gone without even looking back, gone with a newly roused scorn arming her now against herself and him.

Barrington stood for a moment by the table. Then he dropped into a chair and buried his head on his arms, giving way to dry, tearless sobs that shook his whole body, the desolate expression of humiliation beside which death would have been a light episode.

His abandonment of distress had a strange effect on Coilford.

"Devil take it," he muttered uneasily, "I'm getting childish. Why should I care? If I hadn't sworn the fool never to lift a finger against me, he'd have choked me long ago. And who the devil is that outside with that

elephantine tread? Must be the bishop—he sha'n't see him like this."

He glided through the room to the door leading into the hall. There he coughed sharply, and was relieved to see Barrington instantly start up and seek refuge at the west window, just as the bishop, still ponderously angry over last night's insult, stalked in.

The churchman went straight to the mark.

"Sir," he said majestically to Coilford, "I am glad to see you. I believe you promised me an apology from that—person who insulted me last night so grossly at dinner—an apology before all your guests."

Coilford hesitated.

"How about here and now, just among ourselves? There he is by the window. Wouldn't that satisfy you?"

"It would not!" thundered the bishop. "It is not my personal dignity which I uphold, but that of my Master."

"Wine on your cheek seems to be a more serious affair than a blow was on His," murmured Coilford.

"Sir?" said the bishop.

"I merely said you should have your wish, my dear bishop. Barrington will tell you so himself." He crossed to the young man and laid his hand on his arm.

"Mr. Barrington," he said aloud, "the bishop attends your assurance that you will apologize for last night, before the others." In an undertone, shaken into a mood which he could not analyze yet which dominated him strangely, he said sharply: "Tell the consummate old fool to go to hades, if you like. You need not smooth his feathers in the least, if you don't want to."

Barrington shook off his master's touch, turned on his heel and came directly to the bishop.

"Sir," he said gravely, "I am willing to apologize to you before as many people as you like, for an insult which no apology can cover."

"Sir," began the bishop pompously, "I intend to forgive you as a Christian——"

"And to remember as a pagan," muttered Coilford.

"But for the discipline of your soul——"

"Hang it, bishop," interrupted Coilford, "there's my doctor. We'll settle this tomorrow. Let me get through with my physician. He's been harrowing me with all sorts of warnings lately. Has the deuced impudence to say I'll be paralyzed some day if I don't stop this and that! I think he's a fool—but I can't say so."

As Barrington lay staring into the darkness that night he told himself there was little danger that any disease would touch that erect old figure. He had seen the black-bearded doctor coming and going for the past ten days, but had taken it as one of Coilford's fads. He was absolutely unprepared for the news when the physician woke him at three that morning.

"Coilford's had a stroke," the doctor said briefly. "Complete paralysis, involving even the tongue. His heart action is decidedly weak. I shall send a competent nurse as soon as I can get one. Meantime his valet's with him, and will give him a powerful stimulant, marked in the vernacular, every half-hour. Wish you'd look in at five and see if he's getting on all right. His man seems to be faithful, but you might have an eye to things. He'd die if he missed an hour on that stimulant. I must go—important case across the avenue."

"Wait," said Barrington swiftly. "Will he recover?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Partially. He may linger on for years. And he'll regain the full use of his tongue, anyway."

For nearly an hour after the doctor disappeared Barrington lay staring at the clock. Then, moved by an impulse of wonder as to how Coilford might seem under the temporary seal of silence, he rose, dressed and went to his master's room, where, getting no response to his knock, he walked in.

Robins had thoughtlessly turned on

two gas-jets, though the shaded night lamp burned also. The flood of light fell searchingly on the ominously quiet figure lying on the bed.

Coilford's body might have been ready for its last rest but that the hands, instead of being crossed, lay idly beside him. Barrington noted that the powerless thumb had already fallen inward, as though this monster paralysis would assume the form of death before passing into it. But when Barrington looked into the thin old face he found that the virile eyes, wide open and keenly instinct with observant life, stared straight into his, challenging and even ironical.

But the rise and fall of Coilford's chest was so faint that Barrington turned hastily to look for Robins, only to find that the man, in bracing himself for his lonely ordeal, had become as drunk as Barrington had been when he baptized the bishop. And it was now a quarter-past four! Evidently Coilford's dose was long overdue, and if another half-hour passed without it——!

In his first glimpse of the possibilities contained in this situation a vision of hate satisfied obsessed Barrington like a consuming lust. Revenge and safety went hand in hand here. For when he should come back at five and should find Coilford dead, who could be blamed but the drunken valet?

In his first exultation Barrington walked directly to the bedside.

"Do you know, my kind master," he said, smiling cruelly, "that I think it is my turn now? And I am glad that you seem well able to understand when I tell you I mean to leave you here to die to the accompaniment of the drunken wretch's hiccoughs. You will find what an excellent thing intoxication is."

The motionless figure could not answer; but the fierce gaze grew fiercer still.

"All your devilish stratagems have come to this," exulted Barrington. "And if I must still keep faith with you and let myself be branded for these past months' work as a shame-

less, cowardly clown; if you have succeeded in rooting my honor in the sloughs of disgrace, fate has yet made me some little return in sparing me nearly three-fourths of my time with you. For I am bound to obey only your given orders, and since you cannot speak——”

He paused significantly while the unfaltering eyes stared dauntlessly up at his triumph.

“There are new lands,” he resumed. “I shall go abroad to my brother. Good-bye, Mr. Coilford!”

The unsearchable old eyes closed wearily, and the whole masque was so death-like that Barrington, not caring to see the actual dissolution, foretold more clearly each moment by the now scarcely perceptible breathing, walked hastily to the door.

An irresistible instinct made him turn again, however. Then he saw that the eyes had reopened and that a look of desperate but eloquent appeal was in them. Remembering the day on which he had asked mercy “for God’s sake,” and had been met with a taunt, he smiled again.

Then his gaze traveled to the pitifully indropped thumb, and he discovered resentfully that the desolate weakness was touching him as the new humility of the fierce eyes could not do.

In the corner Robins mumbled weirdly to himself, but Coilford’s glance never wavered from the man at the door.

Barrington still stared at Coilford’s emaciated hand, which had so often seemed to him like the talons of a hawk. Now, in its inability to make a single saving gesture, it fascinated and shook him strangely. To other men death under such circumstances would have been a mercy; but Coilford, as Barrington knew, would live at any price. Bare life—that was what his enemy was asking now—mere existence, such as filled the lungs of even the brutes. For a moment the young man’s resolution seemed to waver—then his face hardened and he bore down on Coilford.

“Damn you,” he said hoarsely. “Damn you, you withered hound!”

Doubtless Coilford could understand clearly, doubtless he regretted the last poor moments, which it seemed Barrington was about to shorten; for the old man went ashen with something very like terror, and a sound even gurgled in his throat.

Barrington bent swiftly over him, as though he would carry out his impulse before wisdom put it aside. In the next moment he slipped a powerful arm under his master’s shoulders and, lifting Coilford a little, poured a measure of the stimulant with his left hand and held it to Coilford’s lips.

Coilford gulped down the liquid forced on him with an ease which showed his throat, at least, to be in good condition, and then sighed with heartfelt relief. The medicine must have been wonderfully virtuous, or else a miracle followed, for Barrington’s patient suddenly sat upright, wiping his mouth pettishly with the finest of cambric handkerchiefs, while his nurse stared at him aghast.

“My dear Barrington,” said the invalid coolly, “your nursing and your language are on a par. You spilt that vile stuff all over me!”

A yell from the frightened Robins punctuated the last remark.

“Mist’ Co’ford’s back t’ life!” he howled. “Back to haunt Robins—to haunt best servant best master ever had!”

His incoherent plaint ended in a loud wail which brought the frightened household on the scene.

“Oh, come in, come in!” cried Coilford tartly to the alarmed group. “There’s nothing wrong but a tipsy valet who has been of unexpected aid in an experiment—though Mr. Barrington does look as though he’d seen a ghost, sure enough. No, don’t go—come in here, all of you! I want you to hear what I have to say.” His tone changed suddenly as he turned to Barrington. “My dear boy, give me your hand. You’ve won fairly and squarely, and if public explanations and apologies are worth

anything, tomorrow you will take your place in earnest as my guest of honor."

In Barrington's face there was a mingling of relief, hope and half-confessed shame.

"Thank God," he exclaimed, "that I saw my way in time!"

The old man's eyes twinkled with a new and kindly light.

"Well," he said, "that look on your face did come near scaring me to death. But do you think I would have let you dispose of me in that cold-blooded fashion? Nothing was farther from my plan. And as for my helplessness—even doctors can lend themselves to innocent little plots—when they're asked."



A PORTRAIT WE ALL RECOGNIZE

A MOTHER.

A FRIEND (*who has just returned from a long journey*).

THE CHILD (*a girl of ten years*).

THE FRIEND (*affectionately addressing THE MOTHER*)—Dear Fanny, I am so glad to see you again! It is ages since we have had one of our nice, long, intimate, confidential talks, is it not? And there is so much I wish to tell you and have you tell me.

THE MOTHER—Yes, indeed, I—

THE CHILD—Mother said yesterday that she would take me to a matinee today if you didn't come, but if you did she would buy me a box of candy, if I promised not to fuss. Didn't you, mother?

THE FRIEND (*hastily*)—Fanny, how is Alice? Is her health better?

THE CHILD—I know who you mean. She's in the hospital. It was a very serious operation, and she had four doctors. They can't tell yet whether she will live or not, can they, mother?

THE FRIEND (*icily*)—What have you been reading lately, Fanny? Is there anything new and good?

THE MOTHER—I have—

THE CHILD—Oh, yes! that new novel on divorce is fine, and that funny one where the man ran away with his wife's French maid is good. But I didn't like Henry James's last book. I don't care for James, do I, mother?

THE FRIEND (*disgustedly*)—Have you been to any of the new plays, Fanny or heard much music?

THE CHILD—Of course, we've been to all the plays. I think George Ade is a greater dramatist than Pinero.

THE FRIEND (*frantically*)—Been getting lots of pretty clothes, Fanny?

THE CHILD—I choose everything mother wears. I made her leave Madame X—and go to Mrs. Y—. I think Y— fits her better, although X—'s evening gowns are prettier.

THE FRIEND (*furiously*)—Perhaps, Fanny, you will come to luncheon with me some day, when your daughter is in school?

THE CHILD—Oh, mother never goes anywhere without me; do you, mother? She wouldn't know how to behave.

THE FRIEND *leaves the house tightly clenching her hands to save herself from the stain of bloodshed.*

MRS. WILSON WOODROW.

BALLADE OF THE BATHER

MY bathtub does not change its size;
 My towels neither shrink nor break;
 The water keeps its normal guise;
 The faucets keep their former make:
 Yet in my Eden crawls the snake!
 One single treasure wastes away;
 In suds and lather, flake by flake,
 My soap grows smaller day by day!

"Behold! we eat and have our pies!
 With Clos Vougeot our thirst we slake!
 Our ointment is no bait for flies!
 And nothing wastes!"—Alas! I wake:
 It was a dream!—I lie and quake;
 My bath awaits; I may not stay.
 I scrub and shiver, plunge and shake:
 My soap grows smaller day by day!

In vain the wisdom of the wise!
 In vain is labor's sweat and ache!
 In vain our Newcombs watch the skies,
 Our Pearys freeze, our Stanleys bake!
 The brave old earth, with bluff and fake,
 Flaunts these to hide her own decay;
 But to my heart these words she spake:
 "My soap grows smaller day by day!"

ENVOY

O Prince of Printers! prithee take
 This verse, at half thy usual pay,
 That I may buy another cake:
 My soap grows smaller day by day!

JOHN MOWATT.



HIS PROGRESS

"AND I suppose you remember Freddy Swatter?—that little freckled chap who sat over to the left of us in school, and who was always writing poetry, or trying to. Well, he's made a name for himself in literature."

"You don't say! What has he published?"

"Oh, he hasn't published anything yet. He's adopted a *nom de plume*."

THE TRANSFER OF THORNEYCROFT

By William Hamilton Osborne

THE stout, fluffy woman in the victoria was Mrs. John P. Tully.

Her husband, John P., eighteen months before, had existed merely as an atom in the great aggregation of men, unnoticed, unhonored and unsung; but he had bought C. T. & A. at the precise instant that it began to rise, and he had sold it at the psychological moment when it began to fall—and there you are.

Q. E. D., Mrs. John P. Tully was today the star customer of Mrs. Anastasia Ormsby.

"It is such a privilege," whispered the appreciative Mrs. Tully to herself, "*such* an opportunity, to be *able* to come to Mrs. Ormsby's. It is so very, *very* pleasant to be rich." From which sentiment, if from nothing else, it would be quite evident that Mrs. Tully had not been very rich for very long.

She glanced with complacent satisfaction at the three other fashionable equipages which hovered in the immediate vicinity of the neat brownstone corner house. Then, with a harmless air of importance, forthwith she bustled into Mrs. Ormsby's reception-room. The buttons at the door announced her, and a stunning girl, with an abundance of brown hair and with very expressive brown eyes, tripped into the room and smiled upon her. The stunning girl was Miss Janet Hamilton, the very efficient first assistant to Mrs. Anastasia Ormsby.

"In just a moment, Mrs. Tully," she remarked; "this seems to be our busy day."

Mrs. Tully nodded a gracious assent. Under ordinary circumstances she might have been impatient. But now

she was glad, she told herself, that it *was* their busy day. For at that moment, in Mrs. Ormsby's reception-room, there were, speaking from a social point of view, four women of considerable note. One of these women Mrs. John P. Tully knew; the other three she was quite anxious to know, and had been for some time. Her one acquaintance, fortunately, knew the others, and—in five minutes it was Mrs. Tully's busy day. This, be it said, was one of the little things likely to happen at Mrs. Ormsby's, and little things of this kind invariably figured in her bills, though such items were not written out for those who run to read.

Half an hour later the stunning girl once more touched Mrs. Tully on the arm. To Mrs. Tully this half-hour had seemed but a fleeting moment, for she had been chiseling her way, with some degree of success, into the stony heart of society. Once upon the second floor, however, she removed her bodice and then turned to the girl. "But," she inquired suspiciously, "where is Mrs. Ormsby this afternoon?"

The girl smiled a propitiating smile. "You know, Mrs. Tully," she ventured, "that I can fit you quite as well as Mrs. Ormsby can, and——"

Mrs. Tully stopped her. Mrs. Tully had a temper, and her face grew red. "Why," she insisted, "*isn't* Mrs. Ormsby here? She told me that she would be here this time, sure. This is the second time that she has disappointed me. If I pay her prices," added Mrs. Tully convincingly, "I surely am entitled to her services."

Miss Janet Hamilton shook her head

in a deprecating way. "I agree with you entirely, Mrs. Tully," she responded, "though of course I can't say so to Mrs. Ormsby. And here she's disappointed you, and Mrs. Pallet-Searing, and Miss Pauline Wilkinson—I guess you know them, don't you?"

Mrs. Tully *did* know them—she had met them for the first time within the last twenty minutes—and her wrath softened as she recalled the fact. The girl took quick note of this.

"And then," protested the girl, "they all complain to me instead of to Mrs. Ormsby. But Mrs. Ormsby *will* go—and go. And she tells her customers that I can give them better satisfaction than she can, even. But *you* see, Mrs. Tully, *that* doesn't go down with *them*."

Mrs. Tully donned the bodice that she had just doffed. "Miss Hamilton," she said firmly, though in a somewhat mollified tone of voice, "I have no fault to find with you. But when Mrs. Ormsby makes an appointment with *me* it is her business to be sure to keep it. You may tell her that I shall not come here again until she is able to give me her undivided time and attention." Her nose was lifted just a fraction of an inch higher in the air. "There are other modistes in town," she went on, "just as good as Mrs. Ormsby, who would give their eyes to have *my* custom, too."

The girl nodded sympathetically. Mrs. Tully, having restored herself, as to hooks and eyes and buttons, to a normal condition, started out, and then, pausing at the door, turned back for just an instant.

"Where *is* Mrs. Ormsby, anyway?" she queried.

Miss Janet Hamilton smiled. "Did you *ever*, Mrs. Tully!" she exclaimed. "She's tooling a coach-and-four over to Tuxedo—with her own hands—and back again."

"Tooling a coach?" responded Mrs. Tully. "No! What for—who with? For mercy's sake!"

The girl took a long breath. "Just think," she answered, "with—with Mr. Thorneycroft."

Mrs. Tully gasped. Then she stepped back into the middle of the room. "Thorneycroft," she repeated. "With—Mr.—Thorneycroft?"

Mrs. Tully forgot her anger, forgot everything, indeed, save the importance of this bit of gossip. "Is—is it serious?" she demanded. "Is—is she going to marry—Thorneycroft?" She evidently was reasoning with herself that if *she* had ever tooled a coach-and-four with any man she ultimately would have married him.

Miss Janet Hamilton laughed a merry laugh. "She can, if she wants to," answered she. "Mrs. Ormsby can marry anybody that she wants to."

"Why, then," ventured Mrs. Tully, her imagination carrying her as far as the fabulous maid who balanced the basket of eggs upon her head, "why, then, she'd have to give up business if she married Thorneycroft."

There was a rustle of silken skirts. A woman of thirty-five, with black hair and clear-cut features, had entered and was standing in the doorway. Her face was flushed with outdoor exercise. It is safe to say that at that moment she was more becomingly gowned than any other woman in the city. She shook her head and smiled at Mrs. Tully.

"Never, Mrs. Tully," she exclaimed, "never. I'll never give up my business for any man. Any man who marries me must marry the establishment, the business and all the appurtenances."

"Being one of the appurtenances," demurely commented Miss Hamilton, "I suppose he'll have to marry me."

"I'll never give up business," repeated Mrs. Ormsby decidedly; "no, not for any man."

Her fair assistant smiled. "It seems to me," she said, with a far-away look in her eyes, "that *I* would never marry a man for anything *but* that—just to give up business, to cease earning my daily bread—just to take my ease. That's the way *I* feel about it, Mrs. Ormsby."

"Now, Mrs. Tully," began Mrs. Ormsby in her best business manner,

and after drawing out her hatpins and laying a wonderful creation in the line of headgear upon a teakwood table, "now, Mrs. Tully, you come right back here and get right into that new gown of yours."

Mrs. Tully obeyed. Mrs. Ormsby was tactful, but she was masterful besides, and handled her customers without gloves, and they seemed to like it.

"Now," she exclaimed triumphantly as she walked slowly round and round her client, "now, Mrs. Tully, you've got what I call *figure*. You know," she added, "that you didn't have it six months ago—you needn't tell *me*. Now you've really got it, and I don't mind telling you who gave it to you. It was Janet, here. She carved that gown from top to toe, and there's no one could do it better. You're perfect in that frock, Mrs. T., simply perfect. Can't you see, now, that it's the figure that counts so much, just the *figure*? I'd rather see a woman in a well-cut calico dress than in a ten-thousand-dollar gown that slumped and bagged and dragged and pulled. I would, and so would you, Mrs. Tully. I tell you," she added, "that you're the real thing in that gown, and no mistake."

Mrs. Ormsby was right. She understood her business. She had succeeded because she was one of the few women who understand the true theory of gores and stiffening.

"It's figure, figure, figure," she kept telling people. "Don't pay your money for materials—pay it for *figure*." Which meant, of course, from Mrs. Ormsby's point of view, "Pay it to *me*."

Mrs. Ormsby had become well and widely known through this, her specialty. She obtained results. Matchmaking mothers had admitted to one another that it was vastly more important to buy Mrs. Ormsby's creations for a coming-out than for a wedding trousseau.

"Patronize Mrs. Ormsby for your debuts," they would say, "then you are pretty sure to have a wedding."

Mrs. Ormsby was a luxury, but she was a luxury that paid.

From the dingy little flat where she had toiled after the early death of an unsuccessful husband Mrs. Ormsby had advanced steadily, year by year, until she could exploit the brownstone house upon the Boulevard. Her establishment was complete. Yet no name appeared upon her portal, and she never paid a dollar out for advertising; nevertheless, she had advertising, and plenty of it. The "Column of Figures," in a well-known woman's magazine, was edited by her, over her own name, and she contributed regularly to a high-class Sunday newspaper, and was paid well, very well, for doing it. As for the rest, she knew everybody and everybody knew her.

In other words, the time had come when no function, no outing, no ceremony, no journey, was complete unless Mrs. Ormsby had supplied the wardrobes. This being so, the time had also come when everything she touched was turning into gold. Her business grew so fast that she could scarcely handle it; it seemed to her that the great demand could never be supplied.

And yet, so well and wisely had she planned that her establishment seemed to her, for all the world, like a big automatic machine, which, unlike most automatic things, had really learned to run itself. And though Mrs. Ormsby did not realize it, there was one reason for this belief. That reason was embodied in the individuality of Miss Hamilton.

Miss Janet Hamilton was a girl of twenty-three, and she was a beauty in her way. But, what was more important, she had understood, sympathized with and tied up to every pet theory of Mrs. Ormsby's. She understood the business; she understood the anatomy of every customer and her idiosyncrasies. Mrs. Ormsby had indeed spoken truth when she had said that Miss Hamilton was quite as good a craftsman as was she herself.

Mrs. Ormsby knew, beyond perad-

venture, that she could rely implicitly upon this brown-haired young assistant. Knowing it, she made a fatal mistake. For Mrs. Ormsby, imperceptibly and day by day, was drifting into complete dependence upon her; and the time had come when Mrs. Ormsby could not transact her business without the aid of the very necessary Miss Janet Hamilton.

The time had come, therefore, when Mrs. Ormsby had relaxed her constant effort, had relinquished some of the burdens and had divided the care and responsibility. Her income was large, her business running smoothly. She was a woman with a very considerable capacity for enjoyment, and she purposed to enjoy herself.

"And besides," Mrs. Ormsby had whispered gently to herself, "there's Thorneycroft."

Thorneycroft had happened into Mrs. Ormsby's career like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky. Thorneycroft, president of golf clubs, leader of cotillions, tooler of four-in-hands, had met Mrs. Ormsby, appeared as she had been in one of Mrs. Ormsby's superb gowns, and he had bowed low at her shrine, dazzled and entertained for the whole of an afternoon. After that he began to think seriously about her.

Thorneycroft was one of those frequent individuals who are in every way eligible—and very frequently unmarried.

Everybody knew Thorneycroft; he had been best man at everybody's wedding; he was master of ceremonies at every house party and on every yachting trip. He was all things to all men and women in his set.

But he didn't own a yacht or a four-in-hand or a saddle-horse, or anything worth having; and unfortunately, despite his blue blood and his magnetism and refinement and his popularity, it was evident that Thorneycroft, nevertheless, was a blatant fortune-hunter.

"No rich man's daughter for me," he had confided to his intimates; "I want an heiress, with money in her own right. I've seen too much of men

who married rich men's daughters. None of that for me."

Thorneycroft might have married a dozen times; in all probability there were a lot of fine girls, any one of whom he might have had; but the girls, rich in their own right, to whom Thorneycroft constantly addressed himself, quite as constantly rebuffed him; they guessed—and they guessed right.

Thorneycroft's income did not suit him; he wanted more; he yearned for the material things of life; and the older he became the more eager and anxious he was getting. It was just after he had been refused for the third time by Miss Ethel Dawson-Blake that he happened upon Mrs. Anastasia Ormsby. Mrs. Ormsby, herself, was nibbling at the crust of society. She had written a little drawing-room drama of real life, and a local syndicate had put it on, and society extended its hand somewhat begrudgingly to Mrs. Ormsby, and—in that way she had met Thorneycroft, and was quite glad of it, too.

"Jove," Thorneycroft had assured himself, turning the matter over in his mind, "the very thing!" And truly, so it seemed. Here was a woman with an enormous business, with an assured income, apparently rich in her own right, good-looking, intelligent and with the ability to enjoy life.

"Why not?" Thorneycroft had asked himself; "why not?"

Mrs. Anastasia Ormsby had been flattered, not so much, be it said, by the man's social position as by his apparently earnest devotion to her—and she permitted Thorneycroft to monopolize herself, her time and her attention, to the exclusion, even, of her customers. And constantly she kept asking the same question that Thorneycroft propounded—"Why not?"

Miss Janet Hamilton looked upon all this and smiled. For in the eternal fitness of things there was a place for her.

"And that place," she thought, "is not the second place in Mrs. Ormsby's business."

She was ambitious. She was begin-

ning to realize that she knew Mrs. Ormsby's clientèle better than Mrs. Ormsby did herself; that Mrs. Ormsby's customers, through constant association, liked her, perhaps, better than they did her principal. These thoughts bred in her mind a remarkably paradoxical idea.

"I am absolutely essential to Mrs. Ormsby's business," she whispered gleefully; "therefore, the sooner I get out of it the better."

A marvelous ambition had complete possession of her. This, she reasoned, was the one opportunity of her life; she must make the most of it.

"Janet," Mrs. Ormsby confided to her one day, "in August I shall go to Europe. No," she added, "not on business. The Paris styles must take care of themselves for once in my life. I'm going over on a pleasure trip, you see."

"And Mr. Thorneycroft—?" hinted Janet, with a smile.

Mrs. Ormsby shrugged her shoulders. "Mr. Thorneycroft," responded she, "will follow his own inclination. If he *should* take a trip across himself——"

Miss Hamilton interrupted her. "When, Mrs. Ormsby, do you expect to announce——?"

But Mrs. Ormsby tapped her on the arm. "Janet," she answered, "you take care of the business and I'll take care of Mr. Thorneycroft."

Janet sobered down at once. "The business," she answered slowly; "yes, to be sure. I shall take care of it—good care, to be sure."

It was just a week before Mrs. Ormsby sailed that Janet approached her on the subject of the business. "Mrs. Ormsby," she remarked, "you know Planton's manager, over on the Avenue, don't you?"

Mrs. Ormsby nodded. "I know her," she answered; "I've often tried to get her—but that was before I met you."

"Well," went on Janet, with a bit of hesitation in her voice, "if you don't mind, I think it's just as well to get her now—I know she'll come."

"To get her now?" repeated Mrs. Ormsby. "And what for, Janet?"

The girl looked her principal in the eye. "She's the very best person you could get to take my place," she answered.

"To take your place!" repeated Mrs. Ormsby blankly; "to take your place!"

"Exactly," returned Miss Hamilton in an even tone of voice. "You see, Mrs. Ormsby, I'm going into business for myself."

"Into business for yourself!" responded Mrs. Ormsby helplessly. "Whatever can you mean, Janet? What is the matter? Is the work too hard—the responsibility too heavy? Is there anything wrong—anything that you don't like? Do—do you want more salary, Janet? I—I want you to be satisfied. I'll do anything you say."

Janet was adamant itself. It was not salary, nor associations, nor hard work, nor anything else that troubled her. She merely was going into business for herself—there the matter began, and there it ended. Mrs. Ormsby was worried.

"I don't see what I'll do without you, Janet," she told her.

"But with Planton's head assistant," returned Janet, "you can get along. I shall stay to train her in and see that everything is running smoothly before I leave. I would do that, of course. Then I'll go."

Mrs. Ormsby reasoned with her for an hour. Then she gave it up. "Well, be it so," she said finally; "get me Planton's manager and I'll do the best I can. But I'm sorry, so very sorry that you've got to go, Janet."

Then it was that Mrs. Ormsby lost her head. Her duty lay before her—her place was in her establishment. She did not realize it. She turned her back upon it. She thought of Thorneycroft and forgot her business.

"The business," she kept telling herself, "will run itself; at least, for the very short time that I shall be away."

And yet, staring her in the face

was a veritable crisis in her business life. And she did not know it when she saw it; it was not given to her, just then, to read the signs. But the sword of Damocles was poised above her head.

"Janet," said Mrs. Ormsby as they parted, "I wish you'd give me your full measurements in detail—the latest ones you have. I'm going to have a Frenchman build you something that will be a dream—all for yourself. Give me the measurements. We can fit and alter it when I get back. Good-bye."

Thorneycroft was at the pier when Mrs. Ormsby sailed. "Don't be surprised," he told her, "if you find me toddling over on the next boat after this. I'm liable to do just some such thing."

"I should be very much surprised," said Mrs. Ormsby later to herself, "if you did *not* do it, Mr. Thorneycroft."

II

It was nine weeks afterward that she returned. With her she brought a new creation for Janet; and with her, also, returned Thorneycroft.

When she reached home she found Planton's assistant, a wonderfully capable woman, whom Mrs. Ormsby, in her less successful days, had tried in vain to lure from Planton.

"Well, well," said Mrs. Ormsby to her, "I'm glad to get back. Had no end of a good time. And I've brought, oh, such a dream of a beauty of a gown for Miss Hamilton! Planton, even, never saw one like it. Miss Hamilton—she's gone, I suppose. And where *has* she gone? And how is business? And tell me all about it?"

Monsieur Planton's late assistant bowed gravely. "Madame," she began politely, "Miss Hamilton has gone." She led her principal to a front window. She pointed to a light brick house, down on the next block, in front of which at least two carriages were waiting.

"She has gone—down there," she

continued. "And business," she added, "madame," this with a despairing shrug of the shoulders, "madame, *there is no business*. So!"

"No business!" echoed Mrs. Ormsby, with a gasp; "no business! And why not?"

"Because," returned the other persistently, "because, madame, Miss Hamilton has gone."

She paused an instant. "The business, madame," she concluded, "has all gone with her, madame."

It was too true. Miss Janet Hamilton had seized opportunity by the forelock; she had done the right thing at the right time. "And why should I not," she had reasoned with herself, "if I have kept Mrs. Ormsby's business in shape when she neglects it? If Mrs. Ormsby's customers come to Mrs. Ormsby's because they like me, why should Mrs. Ormsby, and not I, get all the benefit?" It seemed fair enough. It seemed simple enough. She had merely opened an establishment and had made a bid for custom—and the custom had come. To Janet Hamilton it was a simple proposition.

But it was a staggerer for Mrs. Ormsby. And Mrs. Ormsby did what she had wellnigh forgotten how to do—she sat down and cried. After she had finished crying for the time being she braced up a bit, and her first act was to tuck away in an unused closet the bewitching gown that she had purchased while abroad for Miss Janet.

"Now," said Mrs. Ormsby, "I must find out just where I stand." The first thing of which she felt assured was that her customers had actually deserted her. As a matter of business she sought out one or two.

"But, Mrs. Ormsby," Mrs. Pallet-Searing told her, "Miss Hamilton does superb work. You told us that yourself. And then, her prices are so much lower than yours ever were. I'm sure she gives *me* the utmost satisfaction."

Mrs. Ormsby went back. "To cut prices!" she complained bitterly. "I never should have thought it of Janet—to cut in under me, that way."

However, Mrs. Ormsby still had one

or two good customers who clung to her. One of these was Mrs. John P. Tully, her old star client. And these, it seemed, constituted her only reliable assets. And her liabilities——

"Dear me," wailed Mrs. Ormsby, "I spent on the other side nearly all I had with me. I thought I'd have plenty more when I got back—or lots in sight, at least. And now—just think!"

Speaking financially, Mrs. Ormsby had burned the candle at both ends. Her establishment was costly on the one hand; her pleasures costly on the other. She was a woman with a large income, with big expenses, with little capital.

And now her income had dwindled to a mere nothing. Day after day she watched the carriages pass her place and stop in front of that light brick residence on the next block—the same equipages that formerly had stopped at hers. Day by day she watched her old customers trip lightly up Miss Hamilton's limestone steps, and day by day she found herself growing thin with real anxiety.

The smallest source of income was doubly welcome now. She started to figure up. There, for instance, was the magazine. But the magazine sent in no cheque. And when she wrote about it they returned to her a bulky envelope containing some original manuscript of hers—returned, with the thanks of the woman's magazine. *Her* column, said the note, had been discontinued. She sent out and obtained a late issue of the publication. *Her* column *had* been discontinued, it was true. But there was another, similar in all respects, save as to the name and initials of the editor. The subscriber A. O. of Mrs. Ormsby's "Column of Figures" had given place to the underwritten J. H. of Miss Hamilton's "My Lady's Lingerie."

Mrs. John P. Tully, one of Mrs. Ormsby's aforesaid remaining customers, had one vice. She ate too much; and then she took too little exercise. She was growing disgracefully and unwarrantably stout. It was impossible any longer for anyone to keep her figure within bounds.

Mrs. Ormsby had to listen to *her* while she told Mrs. Ormsby that she had lost her cunning; that she was no longer the artiste she had been.

"I've done the best I could," Mrs. Ormsby told her, looking with despair upon Mrs. Tully's girth. "I am quite sure that no one could do better."

"Well," Mrs. Tully angrily replied, "I *hope* I'm not going to look like *that* for the rest of my days. If you don't know how to fit me I'll get someone who does."

And while Mrs. Ormsby watched she entered her victoria, drove a block, alighted and entered the establishment of Miss Hamilton. Then Mrs. Ormsby sat down and cried again.

After that things happened. Her landlord sent in a request for immediate payment of rent that was two months in arrears. He had never had to do such a thing before. The day after that a department store sued her for a big bill of goods, purchased on the usual credit, and recovered judgment thereupon.

"What shall I do?" whimpered Mrs. Ormsby helplessly; "what *shall* I do?"

Ordinarily she was accustomed to keep her own counsel. But this was a crisis that must out. "I must confide in someone," she told herself. "I'll tell Thorneycroft about it, and see what he says." She was glad afterward that she did tell him.

Thorneycroft, it seemed, was quite ignorant, as was everybody else, of the true state of affairs. He did not, could not, know that Mrs. Ormsby was in sore straits. Mrs. Ormsby did not announce a little matter like this to the public. To Thorneycroft, and to all those of his ilk, Mrs. Ormsby still presented a smiling countenance; to him she still was the same prosperous, happy, attractive little woman she had ever been.

"And, by Jove," Thorneycroft had told himself as he thought about her, "it's about time I brought matters to a focus. If I'm going to say the word, I'd better do it now. I may not get such a rattling chance again." Thus

Thorneycroft, with the wealthy little Mrs. Ormsby in his thoughts.

He attired himself, therefore, with unusual care one evening, and made his way to her abode. "My fifth proposal," he announced to himself, "and the only one, at that, where I ever had the ghost of a show of winning out."

Mrs. Ormsby, in a gown of black, received him. She was as beautiful as ever, but somehow she looked different. He could not know that she had been weeping all the afternoon. Thorneycroft stretched out his hand and took hers, and there was something—some added pressure, some subtle difference in his manner, that made the pretty little woman do the natural and feminine thing that she had determined on. She was glad, afterward, she did.

"I am going," she said to him, "to tell you all about it." Thorneycroft nodded easily, though he hadn't the slightest idea what might be the subject of her projected conversation. Then she broke down the barriers of all restraint, and told him, as one friend might tell another, the whole story—the harrowing tale of the disastrous rivalry of Miss Janet Hamilton, and the unmitigated ruin that resulted from it.

Thorneycroft heard it all politely, and then—he froze. He did it gently but completely. He was almost entirely congealed when he left her alone that evening.

"Jehoshaphat!" he exclaimed as he walked hastily down the Boulevard, "but that was a thunderingly narrow escape—for a man like me!"

Mrs. Ormsby understood. She had made another mistake. She saw now that Thorneycroft was not the Thorneycroft she thought she knew. Her ideal was shattered. She went to her boudoir. She had had already some recent acquaintance with tears; she thought that she was well versed in the art of crying. But, after it was all over, she had to acknowledge to herself that never in her life had she wept as she wept that night.

She had wanted sympathy, genuine sympathy, from Thorneycroft. That was all she wanted—advice and sympathy and a little cheering up, and he had not offered it to her. She had asked for bread and he had given her a stone.

It was two o'clock in the morning when she dried her tears. "That ends it," she declared grimly, shutting her teeth together with a little click; "no more tears. My chief concern was about him. Now I'm through. Tomorrow I'm going to start in, in dead earnest, and work out my own salvation. I can do it, and I will."

All that night she sat, wide-eyed and calculating, at her window, gazing into space. The next morning a great peace was upon her.

"I think," she whispered confidently, "that I have found the way—the way."

That day Miss Janet Hamilton was startled by the receipt of a note written in a familiar hand, signed with a familiar name.

MY DEAR JANET—Ever since I came back I have been busy with the winter costumes; have had, in fact, hardly time to breathe. Things are settling down now to the usual routine, and I am going to entertain a mite. Mr. Thorneycroft will be here Friday night to dinner. You have never met him. Come over in the afternoon and stay to supper. I shall be so glad to see you.

This note from Mrs. Ormsby puzzled Janet Hamilton; there was something about it that she could not fathom. There was no hint of venom or of ill success. Here were overtures that came, not, apparently, from a poverty-stricken failure, but from a well-poised, well-satisfied woman of the world.

"She probably is going to marry Thorneycroft," Janet reasoned with herself, "and so—she doesn't care. That must be what it is."

Thorneycroft pondered awhile before he accepted *his* invitation for Friday night. "But, pshaw," he finally exclaimed, "I'll have to let the little widow down easy, anyway. And there'll be somebody there, besides.

And I can leave before things get too confidential or uncomfortable—leave and never go back again. I'll go—I'll have to go."

Mrs. Ormsby welcomed Janet eagerly and warmly, late in the afternoon. "I wanted you here early," she told her, "because I wanted you to wear this gown tonight."

She drew from its wrappings what was actually the most superb creation that Janet's eyes had ever feasted on.

"Whose—whose is it?" gasped Janet.

Mrs. Ormsby smiled. "I had it made abroad," she answered, "as I told you, from the measurements. I want, though, to be quite sure that everything is right. So I took time by the forelock. My dear," she added, kissing her, "it's for you and no one else."

Janet gasped again. "For—me!" she echoed helplessly. And then she tried it on; it was almost perfect as it was. It needed but a touch of Mrs. Ormsby's deft fingers here and there to give it the appearance it was intended it should have.

"Now, my dear Janet," sighed Mrs. Ormsby, "look at yourself in the cheval glass yonder, and tell me what you think."

Janet looked. She did not say. She *knew*—knew that there was not that night, in town, a more stunning girl, more becomingly clad, than was she herself. She knew it, and her eyes glowed, her face flushed with pleasure. Little Mrs. Ormsby said nothing—but *her* eyes twinkled, just a bit.

A maid knocked on the door and pushed it slightly open. "Mr. Thorneycroft," she announced.

When the dinner—and it was a good one—was less than halfway through that night Thorneycroft knew that he was fast in the toils. It was not altogether a question of money this time, though Thorneycroft kept that in the background, too—the fact that this girl was the successful rival of little Mrs. Ormsby. But it was the beauty of the girl that was overpowering. And she, knowing how she looked,

made herself as interesting and entertaining as she seemed to be; she brought her individuality, so to speak, up to the colors.

And beside her sat little Mrs. Ormsby in her somber black dress—a lily beside a young rosebud just bursting into bloom.

"I have her customers," whispered the rosebud to itself, "and now I have her sweetheart—I'm sure, I'm sure I have him."

This was the last time that Thorneycroft ever entered the portals of Mrs. Ormsby's home. But it was quite otherwise so far as the portals of Miss Janet were concerned, for when he left *her* at her own door at a late hour that evening he told himself that here was the shrine at which he must worship in the future—here were youth and beauty—and prosperity combined.

"And—figure," whispered little Mrs. Ormsby to herself that night.

Within three weeks Thorneycroft had declared himself and had been accepted by a beautiful girl in a beautiful gown. Miss Hamilton had swept him, like a whirlwind, off his feet, and he was quite glad of it, too.

Janet, when next she met with Mrs. Ormsby, was contrite. She felt somewhat apologetic at filching from Mrs. Ormsby the man who had been Mrs. Ormsby's chief admirer. Mrs. Ormsby laughingly forgave her.

"And after all," protested Miss Janet Hamilton, "I am sure that it was nothing less than that lovely gown that did it." Later, in private, Mrs. Ormsby laughed gently to herself. "And it was I," she thought, "who engineered the building of that gown."

Thorneycroft and Janet Hamilton were married. Janet's business went merrily on up to the very date of the wedding. It was not until they stood upon the deck of an outward-bound steamer that Janet sighed with genuine relief.

"I am so glad, dear," she said to Thorneycroft, "that I'm through, for good, with business. So long as I was single—yes, it was well enough. Now

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that I've married, it seems as though the remainder of my life would be a long, long rest. I'm glad," she concluded fervently, "that I'm through—with shop, forever and a day."

Thorneycroft slowly turned to her, with a much-beclouded brow. He was startled—undone, almost. He tried to speak, but the words would not come. He tried to swallow, but failed. Then he pulled hard at his collar and gasped.

"Eh, what, my dear?" he said uncertainly.

She placed her hand lovingly upon his shoulder. "I'm so glad," she reiterated decidedly, "so glad that I'm through with business. It never was for women, anyway, my love."

"Eh, what, my dear?" repeated Thorneycroft. It was the only thing that he could think to say.

Back in the city Mrs. Anastasia Ormsby is quite as busy as she could wish to be. Her customers are legion—and as highly aristocratic as they

ever were. Her column in the woman's magazine sparkles with new ideas and innate cleverness.

"Miss Hamilton *was* cheap," said Mrs. John P. Tully to her one day, "but somehow, Mrs. Ormsby, after all, she—she wasn't *you*, you know."

Mrs. John P. Tully sighed as Mrs. Ormsby pulled in Mrs. John P. Tully's stays. "She was a good dressmaker, too," went on Mrs. Tully, "but she *didn't* seem to know quite as much about figure as you do, yourself."

"Don't you believe it," returned Mrs. Ormsby. "Now that she's married I can tell you with impunity that it really was a gown she wore that captured Thorneycroft. That's true."

Mrs. Tully smiled reminiscently. "Do you know," she confided, with a simper, regarding her ample proportions in the mirror, "do you know, Mrs. Ormsby, I have always believed that it was *my* figure that made John P. propose to me. I do."

A maid tapped lightly on the door. "Mrs. Pallet-Searing," she announced.



SILENCE

TRANCED, brooding hours, hours motionless,
 Like lilies at the moment when they break
 Into full flower, and on the hushèd lake
 Lie still and dream of white; hours that caress
 With silence, and that woo a wilderness
 Of beauty from the air; hours that can make
 Flowers into spirits, souls to flowers and take
 Both softly home—these are the hours that bless.

I long to live with open mind; to hear
 The little sounds. I would not wait for dear
 Dead lips to speak, or hearts to break and give
 My spirit news of what it means to live. . . .
 Tranced, brooding hours—hours motionless
 And still, like years—these are the hours that bless.

ZONA GALE.

THE TRANSIT OF A SOUL

By Frances Aymar Mathews

MY name is Virginia Duer. I was born at Duer's Hollow in the year 1869, on the day of my mother's death.

My father was Professor Caleb Duer; he had been professor of biology in Harvard University until his health failed, and thereafter he usually had one or two students with him going through the preparatory courses.

He owned Duer's Hollow and his father and grandfather had likewise owned it before him; by the time their descendant took up his abode there the place had become about as dilapidated and eery a spot as can well be imagined.

The house was colonial, with big rooms, deep fireplaces, odd little cupboards, queer pantries and a gambrel roof over the widest, windiest garret that ever harbored spiders, bats, mice, owls, swallows and rats.

There was a wide front porch with eight fluted pillars, and peeping beneath its shadow eight round windows, with leaded panes, guarding the door beneath them like eight ogres' eyes. Over the door were carven two hearts joined with chains—the crest of the Duers—set up there by the colonial Duer, I gathered, rather in tribute to fate than genealogy, as he had been the husband of an uncompromisingly uncongenial wife.

A bleak, bare terrace stretched out before the mansion and broke abruptly in a jagged ledge overhanging the ugly Hollow that gave my birthplace its name.

The Hollow was filled to the brim with as black and sullen a pool of waveless, tideless water as ever arose

from the depths of the earth to sicken and make more melancholy the heart of a lonely child. On the southern shore there grew a little fringe of struggling, rueful green, a few water-flowers in the early spring, soon enough dead of their own decay and disgust. They were pale, uncanny-looking blossoms; they reminded me of myself.

I hated them.

I hated myself.

First, I hated myself because I was unhappy, because as a child I had no companions, because I saw no one but my father and the students, who were different each two years, and who either ignored or teased me as their natures prompted.

I hated Duer's Hollow because it was hideous and dismal, and because I very soon, through books, learned that the world was full of other and beautiful places and things, from which I was shut out.

Why?

I was my metaphysical father's own child; therefore I soon learned to call my life "Fate."

I likewise possessed an individuality, and I soon learned also to rebel at "Fate"; to cry out against it in the long nights of winter, raising my strong young lungs in competition with the icy winds as they shrieked and whistled down the chimney, it seemed to me, in defiance of my pain; through the short nights of summer, when the very stars blinked down at me, I thought, in countless derision of my impotent sobs.

The very birds—there were but few of them—whirred on hurrying wings, never alighting anywhere near Duer's

Hollow; only the owls hooted, and now and then a crow laughed mockingly as he skimmed over the pool and away and up and across to the sunny uplands where the grain grew, where the reapers sang, where I was not.

I went nowhere.

Once my father took me with him to Duerville, the nearest town, a ten-mile drive; and I had no desire ever to see it again; a place of dirt, smoke, dinginess and noise.

I never was inside of a church.

My father derided churches and creeds both. He had no faith in aught save one thing, and that was the doctrine of reincarnation. This he instilled into me with pertinacity and regularity.

"Never mind, my daughter," he would often say to me. "If things are not just to your liking in your present estate, there will be better luck in your next mortality. And who knows! That may be not distant; an illness, a blow, a fall into the pool, and your spirit is transposed into a body with such surroundings as may suit it better than these."

I believed this firmly.

I grew to worship daily the possibility of death. I took the axe from the wood-pile, where it lay newly ground against the logs, and drew it gently across my throat, thinking that by so mean a road I might, if I chose, travel to some brighter place of abode than the Hollow. And how I used to sit by the hour and stare at the pool! A leap, a splash, a few widening circles, a little ebb and a noiseless flow, and where should I be?

Who should I be?

One November night when I was fifteen I stood on the porch and thought of this. I stepped off on the terrace; between the bare but interlacing branches of the maples I saw the moon struggling with an army of chasing clouds. I slipped down the terrace, catching at the roots and weeds as I slid.

I stood on the slimy brink of the pool. A long water snake slunk out from under a fallen willow trunk and

crawled down into his muddy, moist lair.

I was not frightened, although, hesitating a little ere he vanished, he turned his venomous head and looked back at me with such evil eyes as called to my mind the legend I had read of the serpent of old and of Eve.

Should I then follow him? Follow his trail to struggle a moment; to sleep; to waken; and find myself another—what other?

Would I remember my past? Would I recollect Virginia Duer and her wretchedness? Would I be able in the midst of my newly found happiness to look back, and so, as it were, triumph over myself?

A light fell athwart the inky waters as I questioned. I glanced around. The new student who was expected had doubtless arrived, and the light was from the windows of his rooms.

I sat down on the willow trunk.

He would tease me; most of them did. My life would go on, a ceaseless procession of days without a meaning and nights as fruitless as its days.

Better to try for a new one—a new life.

It could be mine for the price of a plunge, in yonder where the snake had glided so smoothly.

My hands, one resting on either side of me on the earth, caught at the grasses and frost-bitten stalks of blighted golden-rod. I plucked them by the roots and dashed them from me; I dug my nails deep into the earth, I cursed it for its accursedness to me; I lay down on it and beat it, and shrieked at it and bit it; and I said:

"Now I will follow the snake and see what will come to me."

And then, a shifting of the light in the house at my back, a quick footstep, then my father's slower tread; a voice. It said:

"Then, sir, you have a daughter."

The clay fell through my fingers and the sweat stood upon my brow.

I got up.

The snake came back and looked at me. I shook my head and fled

away, quivering, palpitating, throbbing. I climbed the terrace, sped across the porch—no one was there now. The blinds were open at my father's study windows; I crept up to them and looked in.

Father sat by the table. The younger man stood by the fireplace, leaning a little against the mantelshelf. I knew his name, of course; it was Antony Grey.

Without the cold horror of the pool, where the snake and all his comrades dwelt, without either wonder or whim, something had "come to me."

It was love.

I remembered that in an uncouth fashion I at this time reminded myself of Shakespeare's Miranda, for Antony Grey stood to me in my child life as the first man I had ever seen other than my father.

The students who preceded him had all been mere boys. Antony Grey was twenty-five; he had already been graduated at Harvard and had also spent two years in the medical college in New York. He came to Duer's Hollow to put himself through a severe course of special studies with my father, before going abroad to pursue these further in the universities of Paris and Berlin. His intention was to become a physician, and he brought to his profession an ardor and fervor, love and thirst of learning, and a benevolence which were as natural as they were remarkable.

I am bound to say that other than by treating me with the courtesy natural to a man and a gentleman for any creature going about in gowns, Antony Grey paid no more heed to my existence than had his numerous predecessors—indeed, hardly so much. I used to sit and watch him furtively as he paced the porch up and down with his book open in his strong, shapely hand, his eyes far off, looking at the skies as he revolved in his mind some abstruse problem or complex law of the physical world.

He was beautiful.

To my eyes he was their full. They,

looking at him, could not, would not contain aught else or more.

He was tall and strong and shapely and ruddy, with bold gray eyes and full red lips, closing softly over white even teeth shaded by a tawny beard. He represented to me the splendor of youth's power.

And, without the least question as to his mind or his heart or his character, I worshiped his beauty and the atmosphere which he carried with him and diffused about him as he moved among us and had his being with us. I liked his motions, his way of rising, walking, turning his head or raising his eyes. It all bespoke to me a kind of force with which hitherto I had been wholly unfamiliar. And as I lazed away my days in looking, I grew to covet that upon which I looked.

I wanted Antony Grey for my own.

And as love was born in my uninstructed heart, so also was his twin brother, jealousy. I wanted Antony Grey for my own, and to myself, that none other might ever share a glance or a word of his with me.

I dreamed wild midnight dreams of just us two sailing in far ships across the wide foreign seas; of sweet winds blown off islands full of flowers; of lights that shimmered and so stole not from us the sweetness of the dark, but only gleamed to let us glance into each other's eyes and gather kisses from each other's mouths; of hands that interlocked in thrilling pressure palm to palm, or arms that enfolded me as mine enfolded him—thus to wander up and down and round and round the world at will, and that one will the fondest wish of each.

I used to go off on long lonely walks through the woods, beyond the uplands, and stay away for twelve hours at a time, lying in the tall meadow grass with the whirl of the crickets and the grasshoppers to companion me, and the sun to warm me and the breezes to fan me cool again. . . .

Wherefore?

So that I might have the joy of going back again to look at him anew; so that my ears, weary for the sound

of his voice, might be refreshed with it once more.

I stayed away on a certain Thursday from six in the morning until eight at night. No one missed me. Why should they? No one ever did, least of all Antony Grey.

I saw him lying in the hammock as I crept up the terrace, in the darkness. I sat down when I reached the top, then leaned my elbows in the dewy grass and rested my chin in the hollows of my hands and gazed at him.

"My beloved," crooned I to myself in little sighing whispers as I watched him; "my beloved, ruddy as the dawn, white as the moon, goodly as the fir trees growing in the breezy upland meadows where I have lain to-day, fair as the blossoms on the fruit tree, sweet as the violets that grow in dim deep nooks beside the highway, beautiful as the archangel and desirable as hope itself; my Antony!"

He turned a little toward me. Did he hear me? No; impossible; he could not—nor yet see me.

He raised himself, got up, and then walked away into the house. The hammock swung to and fro from the last touch of his weight.

I sprang up and ran to the porch, and caught it as it swayed; the senseless netting was warm with the warmth of him. I spread it out with my quick, nervous fingers and laid myself down and pressed my young lips to the spot where his cheek had rested. There were tears in my eyes—torrents of tears rushed up and filled them, and great sobs shook and convulsed me as I lay there.

I did not hear him come back. I did not know that he was anywhere near me, until I felt his presence and the firm touch of his hand upon the swaying hammock.

"Virginia, my child," he said, bending his tall head a little above me, "whatever is the trouble? What has happened? Can't I do something for you to help you?"

He had never said so much to me before.

The half sob died in my throat. I

steadied myself and looked up at him. I nodded my head.

"I can? I am very glad; now then, tell me, what is it?"

"Give me your hand," I faltered.

He gave it readily. I laid it on my heart.

"The other one."

He gave that, too, while with anxious eyes and a contracting brow he felt the mad beatings of the heart beneath his hand.

I put the other around my shoulders. I lifted my lips to meet the coming of his; I raised my eyes that their glances might welcome and mingle with his looks.

"Kiss me," I whispered, shivering closer in his clasp.

He kissed me. He was a man.

"Now," I said, half swooning with the touch, "let me die. Kill me! Don't you hear, Antony Grey? Pick up a pebble from the pathway and deal me a blow on my temple, and——"

"Are you mad?" he said, starting back from me.

"Or carry me down to the pool and tie a stone around my throat and throw me into the hole where the snakes breed and writhe—I do not care what becomes of me. Oh, Antony Grey!" I cried, clinging to him, "I love, love, love you."

He wrenched his arm free of me. I saw his face as he did it. I saw the lightning flash of loathing, contempt, pity, scorn, sweep over the lines of its beauty and its manliness. I felt as the snake feels when it twists under the stick that strikes and wounds it.

It was no longer there than a breath takes to come and go across the portal of the lips.

Then, with kinder eyes, he leaned above me.

"Virginia, little girl," he said, "you are only a child; you do not yet know what love is. Some day, when you grow to be a woman and really learn to love some man who seeks your love, you will understand what I mean by saying so. And now—little girl, let us be friends—always—eh?" He stretched out his hand.

I took it between my teeth and bit it so that he winced in his silence.

"Were you ever hungry, Antony Grey?" I asked, throwing his proffered hand from me with passionate fury.

"Yes," he answered simply.

"And you wanted bread and meat, did you not?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose so."

"And if they had given you a lump of ice, what would you have said?"

He did not reply.

"What would you have said?" I repeated, rising and standing up before him and catching up the long frayed end of the hammock rope and striking him on the throat with it.

He caught it deftly and held it firmly while the hot blood surged over his head and face—he at one end of the rope, I at the other.

I pulled it gently, slowly—it would not give. I crept up to him, my stiff little fingers measuring off my paces on the rope's length as I went.

I laid my head up close against his breast.

"Oh, Antony," I sobbed out, "why cannot you love me as I love you?"

"Virginia," he said slowly, "I fear neither you nor I know anything at all about love."

"I do know; I will teach you," I made answer, touching his bearded cheek with one forefinger.

"Good God, child!" he cried, breaking from me with a motion of repellent distaste; "you don't know what you are talking about!"

Going, he unwittingly threw me with my rope against one of the pillars of the porch.

I looked up and saw the hammock hook. I threw the rope over it and brought the loop down and put it over my own head, around my neck, where not so many minutes since Antony Grey's arm had rested. I felt the noose close and closer about my throat as I drew it. If now I were to end myself, what avail? I should go but to return again, a senseless infant in whose world no Antony could exist. I tore the rope from my neck and flung it away.

Why did he hate me so? Why was he so made that he could not love me as I loved him?

I walked into the house. He sat in the study with father, who was reading aloud from a little musty-looking book. I went upstairs to my room. The mirror was opposite the door as I came in. I looked up and saw my own reflection in it by the light of the lamp on the table. I stood still and laughed aloud; the bitter, awful laughter of a loving, unloved woman, who for the first time in her life recognizes her own utter unloveliness.

I was hideous.

I believe I had never really seen myself before in the whole course of my existence. I—the beauty-worshiper, the idolater of tint and tone and line and curve—I stood there confronted by my own intense despairing ugliness. Antony Grey, how could you or any man love such a face as this?

"Virginia Duer!" I screamed, shutting my door and rushing over to the mirror and looking into my own unlovely eyes. "Virginia Duer, I hate you! I loathe you as much as he does—more, more, more! But I will be even with you yet," I cried, "when I return to this world again, after you have had your little day and been put down into the earth, out of sight and out of mind. I will be beautiful; we shall see if I am not. Father says it is always so, unlike succeeding unlike; and then I will have my revenge on you, and men shall marvel at my beauty and love me as you, Virginia Duer, if you lived a hundred years, never could be loved!"

This had happened, as I said, on a Thursday; on the succeeding Saturday Antony Grey left Duer's Hollow.

I knew why. He said to my father that business reasons demanded his presence at once in New York, and that he should go abroad almost immediately. Within a fortnight after he had quitted us father read me his name from the list of passengers for Southampton.

He did not even tell me good-bye;

with an adroit and instinctive tact he managed matters so that his omission seemed natural, and at the same time it was left undone in such a fashion as should not have wounded a more sensitive person even than I.

It did not wound me. I thought I understood perfectly well that Antony Grey could not care even to touch the hand of Virginia Duer. Had I been a man with such fastidious, beauty-loving eyes as his I, too, should have eluded having to look at the body which my restive, rebellious soul inhabited.

When he was gone I fell into a deeper stupor of stagnation than I had lain in before he came. I led the life of a young animal, and often wished myself one, as the spirit within me asserted itself now and then too strongly and caused me to dash my ugly body against the wall or to tear out great handfuls of the auburn hair that hung tangling down to my knees.

I longed to die.

I feared to die.

I yearned, I thirsted and famished for the new, splendid, strong, happy, satisfied life which I believed awaited me so soon as I should be free of this one of Virginia Duer's, and still I shivered in anticipation of the stroke that might open to me the door of my paradise and trembled at the thought of the blow that might break my bonds and bars and leave me—someone else.

Of this someone else I dreamed by night and pondered on by day. She became to me as much of a reality as Virginia Duer, and I followed her course with an intenser interest than it is possible for me to describe. That she should be marvelously beautiful was one fact; that men should love her madly, passionately, often enough despairingly, was another; and on these two foundation-stones did I build the fair and entrancing conception of the creature yet to be born, whose tenelement of flesh this spirit sobbing within my narrow breast should inform. I saw her near me; I heard her voice; I watched her and listened for her; I laughed with her—and ah, I wept with

her—for, fight and scheme in my brain as I would, the bitter bread of tears was what she always ate sooner or later. Sooner or later the sigh in Virginia Duer's bosom was echoed back again to me from my idol.

"Pain is life," I had heard my father say; and I began to believe it was true, for she who walked with me shed tears as for an aching heart.

Three years went by. I was seventeen. I was uglier than I had been when Antony Grey left me. And the pool was blacker, the Hollow dimmer with the thicker growth of the trees, the denser tangle of the underbrush. The birds were rarer; so was the sunshine—save on the slimy bank where the snakes loved to curl and coil and warm themselves, and where the white spiders spun back and forth betwixt the hanging and the swaying of the swamp-willows' dipping branches.

It was in the early springtime when my father said that he was going to Europe. Would I like to go?

Antony Grey was there.

"Yes, I should like to go."

I thought I should like to look at him again, that I might the more firmly imprint upon my mind the memory of his face. I hoped that when I died and returned again I should meet him, and I wished to be able to know him when I did.

We sailed in the *Idaho* on the seventeenth of April. Half an hour before the ship swung out of her dock a messenger came on board with letters for my father. Among them one having a foreign postmark was addressed in the firm, small hand of Antony Grey. This was not remarkable; he had kept up a desultory correspondence with father all through the past three years, in which he had been graduated with high honors at the Paris École de Médecine, and had likewise achieved a not inconsiderable renown in connection with his extraordinary experiments, and success, in resuscitation after apparent death. In brief, Antony Grey was already a famous man in his chosen profession.

"Grey is coming home to America," my father said slowly, cutting open the envelope of another letter.

I made no answer. I shut my teeth together hard. Then I was to be cheated of even looking at him again.

"He was to have sailed on the *Bothnia* from Liverpool today; we shall cross him in midocean."

"Indeed," I responded carelessly.

Five days later we were in midocean. I lay in my cabin and wondered if now—just now, while I counted my breath coming quickly—he were lying over yonder not so far away from me, and if, tossed by the billows, we were then nearer to each other than we should ever be again while I should be I.

The ship plunged fearfully. We were struggling in the embrace of a storm that was already forty-eight hours old. The *Idaho* creaked in every timber, the wind shrieked and howled, the thunder roared, the lightning played, the captain's voice was scarce to be heard from the bridge, and eight bells rang out feebly as I started up from my berth with the last awful dip and din of the vessel.

I sprang out into the saloon. It was already full of half-crazed women and wholly crazed men. I made a dash for the companionway, unheeding father's warning cry to me: "Come back!"

With almost maniacal strength I dash past the officer who would thrust me down the stairs. I break through his arms, I stumble, reel, fall in the blinding mist and spray and darkness of the deck. . . .

As I catch at something I hear the orders to lock the passengers down. I hear, too, the confused din of the sailors as they endeavor to lower the boats; I hear the fog-whistles yelling to the derisive and imperious storm; I feel—oh, God!—as I cling to a dangling rope that I have caught at; as I cleave to it; as I enmesh myself with it; as I clutch it with my teeth; as my fingers close on it; as my long hair twists around and around it; washed, soaked, saturated with the crashing, omnipo-

tent waves that swallow and reswallow me again and again; as its lengths coil about my thin, slim body, tightening with every lunge that tosses me hither and thither—I feel that Virginia Duer's death-hour has come, and—that—an instant hence—I shall awaken, and be—who?

II

I AM Blanche Wheaton.

I was born at sea, in midocean, on board the *Bothnia* in the month of April, in the year 1886—eighteen years ago.

I think I am the most beautiful woman in the world; other people think so too, so I presume that I am not mistaken.

I am glad I am beautiful; I do not think it possible that any other woman could enjoy her own beauty so utterly and perfectly as I do mine; I like to watch it; I like to sit or lie by the hour on a couch before a mirror and stare at myself; I revel in the sublime sense of entire and perfect security which my beauty gives me, in the utter immunity it confers on me from a thousand anxieties to which so many other women appear to be subject. I adore myself—and yet this is hardly quite correct, because it always seems to me that there is an element of gratitude to the Creator in my worship of myself, which almost savors of my being a dual person, or of having been someone else at some other period before I became Blanche Wheaton.

This odd idea possesses me very positively. I am sure that I have been someone else, someone who was unhappy, and whose burden of misery casts over me the only shadow that I ever felt. So sure am I of this pre-existence that I believe I should recognize my former self if I were to encounter her in the flesh.

I have told my mother of this; she frowns and laughs and calls me "a silly child."

Perhaps I am. Sometimes in the night when I lie awake I can feel that

other woman, whom I once was, lying down beside me and sobbing. And then I spring up and light the gas, and look at my face in the looking-glass and see the dimples and the curve of my cheek, and the soft shadows of my eyes, and the red moisture of my lips, the curl and fall of my hair, the soft swell and smallness of my figure—and I smile over my shoulder at that other woman, and shake my head and call out to her to go away.

It is good to be beautiful for oneself, but more—oh, so much more, for others. It is good to be beautiful so that she who looks back at you from your own reflected eyes shall soothe and please you—but it is better, sweeter far, to be beautiful so as to be loved of men.

There is nothing in this round world so blessed, so exquisite to a woman's soul as the love of a man; there is no music so divine, no fruit so full of sun, no wine so sparkling, no praise so dear, no learning so good, no religion so true, no thing so fair, so to be desired as the love that is born in a man's heart for a woman as beautiful as I am; and many men have loved me.

I have never loved anyone. At least I do not know that I love Antony Grey. I suppose I do, for I want his love, and it is the one man's love about the possession of which I am not sure. Perhaps this is the reason that I want it. . . . No, no, a thousand times no! The reason is that I feel for him as I have never felt for man before, a wild, implacable, irresistible, insatiable yearning and tenderness. To Antony Grey I long to give and yield my heart—to other men, sweet as their love may be, I have only pleasure in withholding.

I have known him all my life; he was a passenger coming home to America after his student life abroad, on the ship on board which I was born. I was born in a frightful storm; a storm so terrible that the ship's boats were lowered and every soul expected that his hour had come. In midocean at midnight we crossed the bows of another, a sinking ship, and of all her passengers and

crew but one being was rescued. She was a woman—I have heard mama tell people of it often—a young girl of about seventeen; she was dead when they brought her into the *Bothnia's* cabin, and Antony Grey looked at her. For seven hours she lay there before him an icy corpse, and the sailors were making ready, and the chaplain too, now that a calm had come, to bury her. While he was looking at her, when her life had fled away from her, I was born.

Antony Grey—he was young, impetuous, ardent, full of all the new-found wonder of those discoveries which have since made his name so famous—during those hours toiled over and breathed into and chafed and warmed and held in his arms— Ah! what must it not be to be held in Antony Grey's arms? No wonder the dead girl came to life; should I not know a resurrection dawn so enfolded, even did I lie fifty fathoms deep down under the sea?

She came to life again.

Well, so much for her. She was an episode in Antony Grey's history and one that added so much the more to his renown; and yet she has known that which I have not—the clasp of his hands about her, the breath of his mouth within the soft, cold embrace of her lips. Bah! She did not know it! I have no need to envy her—or any other woman who breathes.

Antony Grey loves no one. He is immersed, absorbed in his profession; he has forgotten all about love. I shall make him remember it. He is forty-seven years old; I shall teach him that youth is not counted by years, nor man's passion by the moon's make of months, the sun's of days and hours.

I came here to visit the Dumonts last Monday. Their place is called Duer's Hollow. They bought it some years since, and have made it a perfect paradise. I have never seen so beautiful and romantic a country place, so delightful an old-fashioned house, with slopes of green and terraces full of roses running down to the Hollow that gives the estate its name. And the Hollow is full of liquid sun-

shine, clear, exquisite, bubbling water that bursts babbling over a rocky grotto at the upper end and flows rippling, sparkling, dancing to its outlet under a rustic bridge by a clump of swamp-willows and near a little bath-house. And they say that this shining lakelet was nothing but an inky, noisome pool, full of horrible shadows and snakes and water rats, when they bought the place.

There are other guests in the house—some pretty girls and a couple of nice men. Antony Grey is coming in a day or two. I wish he were not. There is also one other guest here at Duer's Hollow—a woman. She came this afternoon and I met her on the staircase awhile ago as I was coming up to my room after a chat with Mrs. Dumont.

I did not know of her arrival. Mrs. Dumont had not spoken of it, although I knew she was expected. Her name, as I heard it mentioned, is Miss Harrison.

I passed her on the staircase. I shuddered as my skirts touched hers. My heart stood still; I could not look up into her face. I do not yet know how she looks; if she is old, young, dark, fair, ugly or beautiful; but I do know that the miserable, haunting idea of my once having been someone else, someone else who was most wretched, is upon me with a renewed and intenser force since I met that woman on the stairs awhile ago. I do know in some inexplicable, unexplainable way that she must not meet Antony Grey.

What can I do with her? What can I do to her?

Nothing. But I can write him and tell him not to come. Will he obey my whim? Why should he not? Men always obey my whims.

I wish to see this woman's face; I must see it, now, without waiting. I cannot wait until dinner-time. I will run downstairs again, along the corridor where her rooms are; she will perhaps be sitting with the door open—it is so warm—and then I can look at her. I am going—whither?

I am a fool! What harm can any woman do to me—to me, the most beautiful woman God ever made? And yet—and yet—how the mere atmosphere of this Miss Harrison has affected me; how the bare breath of her soul has scorched and scarified mine; how at this moment I feel—what is it that I feel so, weighing on my heart and crushing it? I must see her.

I have seen her.

I ran swiftly down the staircase and along the corridor. All the doors were closed. I went out on the porch and stood still. The eight round windows up beneath the roof seemed all to be staring down at me in mockery; the Hollow with its dancing waters, I think, laughed and scorned me. I crept along in the shade of the honeysuckle vines, and stooped my head under the hammock that swings at the south end. Here a window was open—the window of her room. I went nearer, clinging to the trellis—nearer still—and then I saw her standing in a slip of sunshine, her long bright hair down-fallen to her knees, her white shoulders slipping loose of her garments. She had a letter in her hand and a smile parted her large full lips.

Our eyes met. She stood still and was quiet, neither amazed nor shocked, dismayed nor disturbed, only catching a little at her gown and drawing it up about her throat with the hand that held the letter.

I did not move, I did not speak; I could not at first, for my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth and I felt my eyes staring from their sockets.

I knew her at once.

She bore the outward semblance of the woman who I once was, the woman who has lain at my side sobbing many and many a night, the woman whose unhappiness has cast over my life its sole shadow. I had always felt sure that, if such a thing were possible, I should recognize her if I saw her.

"You do not know me?" I said at last, faintly and incoherently.

"No," she answered, "I"—with a hesitating grace—"do not."

"I know you, though," I cried; and I added under my breath, "you are I, don't you know?"

"Yes?" she said civilly. "I have a very poor memory for faces, I fear; I beg your pardon, I am sure."

"Never mind," I whispered. "It doesn't make any difference. You are Miss Harrison, aren't you?"

"I am Virginia Duer Harrison," she answered quickly.

"Are you married?" I asked hastily.

"No." She turned deadly pale.

"Neither am I," I exclaimed, half recovering my equilibrium.

"May I ask your name?" she inquired courteously.

"Blanche Wheaton."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, I should have divined," she cried, with a little comprehensive, smiling glance at my face. "I have heard of you. We are fellow-guests at the Hollow, I think?"

"Yes, oh, yes," I sighed.

"Won't you come in and sit down, Miss Wheaton?"

"No, no, thank you—I— It is so cool and pleasant out here."

"You say we have met before, Miss Wheaton?" and Virginia Harrison turned her deep, soft eyes full upon me as she spoke. "May I not know where?" with a smile that revealed to me the white, even beauty of her teeth.

"I do not know," I responded slowly. "I cannot tell; it is very strange!"

"What is strange?" she exclaimed, with a pretty laugh, shaking back the tawny lengths of her lovely hair from her face as she leaned against the case-ment and looked frankly at me.

As she leaned there I looked at her. Is she a beautiful woman?

No—and yet in the large, sweet softness of her red and curving lips, in the depths of her round and roving eyes, in the whiteness and suppleness of her little tender hands, in the cool breadth of her brow, in the sweeps of her fragrant, sun-bronzed locks—what magic lay in these that, even as I

looked, I saw the strong, shapely fingers of Antony Grey twining in and out of those fine, sweet-scented tresses, I beheld his hands straying in the whiteness of her throat, drawing her head to him.

I had never imagined him so before, save with that dead girl whom he brought to life years ago on board the *Bothnia* when I was born.

I do not know what possessed me—nor do I care. Why should I? But I sprang into Virginia Harrison's room and then stopped short. I sidled up to her with my head hanging. I laid my finger on the round of her waist, I lifted up my eyes and I said to her: "Will you let me kiss your throat?"

I wanted inexpressibly to lay my lips where I was sure his had been, or would be.

She shrank from me with an expression of haughty disgust.

"My dear Miss Wheaton!" she exclaimed, stepping back and staring at me in unfeigned astonishment.

I laughed aloud. She drew further away and an added expression of fear came into her frank, deep eyes.

"Oh," I cried, still laughing, "you need not fear me. I am not mad, nor is there any taint of inherited lunacy anywhere in my family."

"I am sure not," she answered kindly. "Indeed, Miss Wheaton, you mistake me."

"I think not. You shrank from my kiss. You need not have done so." I sank into a chair. A fire burned in all my veins. I was weak, exhausted, faint. She saw it and fetched me a bottle of salts from her toilet-box.

"Shall I run and get you some wine?"

"No, I am better; it was nothing. You are very good——"

"Do not mention it; there, take a taste of this iced water," and she handed me a glass, and then turned away and glanced out upon the terrace.

"Is this your first visit to Duer's Hollow, Miss Wheaton?" Virginia Harrison asked me presently.

"Yes; and is it yours?"

"Well, yes and no." Miss Harrison laughed as she glanced off vaguely toward the willows that bend over the lake.

I looked over interestedly at her, wondering what she meant.

"That is rather an odd answer to make, but it is nevertheless a true one. Duer's Hollow belonged in my family for four generations. It was mine once; the Dumonts bought the place of me seven years ago."

"Yours!" I exclaimed. "Then of course you have been here before."

"Yes, I have been here before," she said hesitatingly; "but I cannot in the least remember the time nor anything whatever in connection with it, try as I may."

Even as she spoke, her dark fine brows contracted as if in a mental endeavor to recall something of the past.

"You were a child then, I suppose?" I ventured.

"No, I was not," Virginia Harrison said, with a puzzled expression in her eyes. "I was born here and lived here until I was seventeen years old."

"And yet you cannot recollect your home or——?"

"No, nothing, nothing. It is all an absolute blank to me, the whole seventeen years."

"Then you have had a short life," I said, regarding her attentively. "Since you cannot be above two-and-twenty, you have only consciously existed for five years."

"I am thirty-five," she replied, with a slow smile.

I stared at her in amazement. Her face was as round and fair and full and girlish as my own. There was just then a wistful, anxious look in it that betokened a desire to fathom this past girlhood of hers, of which she assured me she had no memory.

"You were, I suppose, very ill, and lost your memory? I have, I believe, heard of such things."

I do not know why I sat there in her room and questioned her; I do not know why I cared anything whatever about her, and at the same time I was

urged thereto by an impulse that I could not seem to disregard.

"I never was ill—consciously—in my life," she returned, still with that vague sense of groping after something quite irrecoverable sounding in her low, rich voice. "I was shipwrecked," she continued.

I sprang up, catching at the table as I did so and causing it to shake on its twisted spindle legs. She steadied it with her hand, regarding me solemnly the while as evidently a person whose moods were not to be foreseen.

"I was the only human being saved from a ship full, and when they picked me up I was——"

"Dead!" I panted gaspingly, with my arm pressed tightly against my heart to still its tumultuous beatings.

Virginia Harrison nodded gravely in assent.

"Yes, quite dead. I lay dead for seven hours, and then my life was given back to me——"

"Not *your* life!" I shrieked, shivering in every vein and artery; "not *your* life! Your—your soul fled from you forever into another body!"

She smiled at my vehemence.

"At least," I faltered, "do you not believe such things to be possible?"

"Ah, I do not know; they tell me that my father's belief in such a theory was implicit and that he had so instilled it into me that my own faith was as fixed as his. But, you see, all that is a sealed book to me. I"—she shook her head half sadly—"cannot recollect my father, nor anything whatever about him. He was lost that night at sea."

"How did your life return to you?" I asked, endeavoring to control myself as best I could.

"Oh," she said, "a young physician who was on board the vessel that picked me up experimented with me and the result was successful. You may have heard of him—he has come to be a world-famous man. His name is Antony Grey."

There was a peculiarly touching fall in her tone as she uttered those last two words.

"Yes," I replied composedly, "I have heard of him."

"Perhaps you know him?"

"Yes, I know him," I said monotonously.

"He is coming here to visit, I believe," she admitted.

"Is he?" I returned. "I suppose you have seen a great deal of—Dr. Grey, Miss Harrison, in all these years?"

"I have seen him but once, and that not long ago. You see," she said, idly brushing out her long hair, and wafting to me the sweet scent from its beautiful veil, "the Harrisons, who were passengers on board the *Bothnia*—that is the name of the vessel that rescued me—adopted me, and added their name to my own of Duer; although they eventually found out all about me. I have never been East—their home is in San Rafael, California—until lately, and so until now I have never seen Duer's Hollow—nor Dr. Grey."

She continued to brush out her hair, still sending across the room the perfume of its beauty, while my head sank further down and further amid the cushions of my seat. She seemed to lull me to a slumber that was strange, unserene, full of struggles and anguish, gaspings for breath and gropings for a foothold. At last I started up and, shaking off my stupor, darted toward her. I caught her head in my hands, and holding her face, so blanched with maidenly terror, up between my palms, I looked into it and smiled. She writhed in my grasp and tried to free herself.

"You shrank from the offer of my kiss," I whispered as I held her fast. "You struggle to be rid of even the touch of my hands. You need not; that soul of yours that fled away from you that night eighteen years ago came into me. I was born on board the *Bothnia* two hours after you were laid there, dead, before Antony Grey's eyes. I am Virginia Duer—not you. Mine is the spirit that he brought back from the sea with his lips and, in escaping, it fled into this beautiful, matchless body of mine. And you—you are nothing but

some wandering spirit caught and prisoned by his scientific mechanisms in the body of a dead girl; you"—I shrieked, shaking her with all my force—"are nothing but a galvanized corpse, going about the earth deceiving men with your sham of soul and mind and heart!"

I threw her against the tall, old-fashioned mantel-shelf. She stood still, trembling and yet erect, her large white lids lowered; in her proud meekness she maddened me.

"Why don't you say something?" I cried, devouring her resolute, strange personality with my gaze.

"Very well," she answered, "I will. I will tell you that you are welcome to my spirit if you have it—that I"—she faltered a little—"I would rather owe my very soul to him than claim another in whose giving he had no part."

"You love him!" I shrieked, springing upon her and fastening my two hands with their taper fingers about her throat.

With a firmness and swiftness almost unbelievable she seized my wrists and with dexterous force loosened my hold. Then she half led, half pushed me to the door, opened it and put me out into the corridor. She did not speak, but in the angry splendor of her dark eyes I could see all the wounded woman rise up to reprove and defy me. I hurled the reproof back in her face. I accepted the defiance and hugged it to my breast.

At dinner Mrs. Dumont informed me that Antony Grey was to arrive, with other new guests, on the morrow.

He came in the morning just before luncheon. Miss Harrison was not down to luncheon, nor was she visible all the afternoon. For two long sweet summer hours I had him to myself; I half reclining in the hammock, he sitting beside me smoking, while the other women were silly enough to make spectacles of themselves on the tennis ground, and the other men were miserably following suit and envying Antony Grey.

He would not talk of Miss Harrison, nor would he give me any history of the strange scenes on board the *Bothnia*; but he inadvertently said something which assumed that I knew something which I did not—that he and Virginia Duer had met before that vivid hour which gave her back a life.

For the first time in all the years that we had known each other I thought I saw Dr. Grey's eyes light up with a certain kind of animation as they looked at me. For the first time he seemed fully to take in and realize my beauty. I intended that he should. Yet he seemed not so much to marvel at as to measure it—against what? Could it be that he was comparing me with her?

No matter; other men had before his day compared other women, fairer far than Virginia Harrison, with Blanche Wheaton, and with what result save their vanquishment?

He was a cold-mannered man, but beneath this frigidity what a heart of fire beat! What splendid pleasure would it be to waken Antony Grey's possibilities to a realization of their own existence! And I should do it. Women whose hearts are a heartache for love of a man know how to teach him this lesson, even though they do not know how to impart the knowledge to others.

Miss Harrison was invisible until the dinner-hour, and even then she was a moment late and came into the dining-room just as we were all fairly seated. I chanced to be looking across at Antony Grey, and, although I heard no sound, I knew that she had entered the room from the sudden brilliance of his eyes. He rose to greet her. I looked at her; she was indeed worth looking at. She had on a crêpe gown of yellow, with a cluster of yellow roses at her corsage and topazes shining in her tawny hair and on her round wrists and slender, pretty fingers; there was something barbarous and unique, soothing and regal in this woman, with her garment of yellow and her eyes like satin sloes.

She was very pale, pale as a pearl is, and no color rose in her cheek to welcome Antony Grey's greeting. Her seat was next to his, opposite mine. I absorbed him for the hour and a half without compunction. She made no motion to prevent me, but I saw the fine curl of her red upper lip and laughed at it as I sipped my wine. After our return to the drawing-room I sang and Dr. Grey turned my music for me.

When I had finished I said: "It is very warm; let us go outside on the porch."

"No," he replied, "you will take cold; it is damp." I saw his glance wander toward her as she sat by an open window. She essayed to close it and he quickly sprang to her assistance with a murmured, "Pardon me!" There were four men to take his place. I had the pleasure of refusing two of them before I went upstairs that night.

Antony Grey and Virginia Harrison spent the greater part of the evening together on the porch. I saw her once in the hammock while he stood beside it; I heard her low, sweet, luscious laugh, the deeper tones of his voice—that was all.

I did not sleep that night; by the way, it was only last night. I went up to my room at eleven; I took off my pink lace gown, with its silvery fringes and sashes, and slipped on a long loose thing of white silk; I took the pins from my hair and sat down by the window. I heard the clock in the hall strike twelve, then one and two; still I sat staring at the stars and at their shadows, winking down at me from heaven, blinking up at me from the lake. I heard a footstep; it was Antony Grey's. He was pacing up and down the porch at this, the north end of the house. So he, too, was sleepless as well as I! I listened to his tread; I felt the soft wind blow against my cheek; I smelled the night-scent of the flowers and the dewy earth. I, who had never wanted for anything longer than five minutes in my whole life without having it, sat there willing to

barter away the life of Virginia Duer for one touch of this man's lips.

I got up from my chair and left my room; I glided down the upper corridor and the staircase and reached the front door. It stood open, and, turning to the right, I slipped out; he was at the left, and in an instant I had gained the hammock. It swung toward me. I caught at it; it was warm from a human weight—could it be hers? No, no, a thousand times no—*his!* I threw myself into the midst of the yielding meshes and clasped my arms about the insensate cords. So I lay crescented in the hammock when Antony Grey came and found me.

As I raised my head my eyes met his. He started. "I beg your pardon, Miss Blanche!" he exclaimed, and then he walked away.

"Antony!" I cried; "Antony Grey!"

He turned, throwing away his cigar, and stopped short, listening.

"Come to me."

"Are you ill?" he said, reaching my side and bending a little to look at me.

"No," I cried. "Oh, Antony! Antony Grey, I love you—love you!"

He shuddered, broke from me, turned back and stood before me.

"No, you don't," he said hoarsely, steadying the hammock; "you do not know what love is, you——"

"Do you?" I asked, springing up and confronting him.

"No," he answered shortly, "not yet."

"Let me teach you. Oh, Antony!" I laid my fingers against his cheek.

He started away from the contact; then, with a kindlier air, he turned and said to me: "Blanche, you are dreaming; you are but a child as yet. Some day, some time, love will come to you; Blanche, not this way, but another, believe me—love will come to you through wooing, and not——"

"That is enough!" I said, catching the still swaying end of the hammock rope in my grasp and twisting it round and round with my tense, nervous fingers. The light from the newly risen lady-moon fell athwart his face, making more comely its ruddy

beauty. Should that beauty be hers and never, even once, be mine?

"Will you kiss me?" I said, swinging the rope-end back and forth between us.

He shook his head and turned away.

"But you shall!" I threw the rope over his throat. "You shall!" For a second of time I tasted an eternity of joy.

Then I pushed him away and rushed into the house, back to my room, to sleep, and to awaken, to rise up, and to move about among my fellow-beings as one of them.

I did not quite know what to make of Virginia Harrison and Antony Grey this morning. They persistently avoided each other; they were not together at breakfast. Miss Harrison drove, Dr. Grey rode; at luncheon they did not exchange a word. I watched them, not caring whether they saw me. Why should I? Antony Grey looked at me very often in a curious, questioning fashion, as if he were speculating on some odd problem.

Very well, let him! I wish he would kill me. I am afraid to kill myself, and yet—that pretty lake with all those stars embroidered over my breast each night as I might sleep beneath its ripples! Should I sleep? What would become of me? Who would I be? Who am I? What is it all, this weary worry, this scorching, smothered flame, this mad unrest and craving that people call life? And yet, to die and leave him here, and leave her here—Bah! It is too bitter. I could better kill her and hang for it than quit the world that held these two together. If I could push her down into the lake and hold her there—if I could—And there she went down yonder to the Hollow as I thought of her. I threw on my hat and sped after her. Too quick for me, she had unlocked the little boat from its moorings and was already out in the middle of the lake, while I stood on the shore.

I hesitated but a moment, and then I entered the bath-house as I saw her turning her boat with the evident in-

tention of heading it down toward me again.

Since she was on the water I would join her in a very few minutes. An expert swimmer, I longed to be swathed in those cool and sparkling sheets of pellucid water, to float out to meet her, and to lure her if I could to some deep, dangerous spot, upset her craft and leave her to perish.

In an incredibly brief time I had slipped out of my clothes and into a snowy white linen bathing suit. No one but the ladies at Duer's Hollow ever bathed in the lake, and the afternoons were supposed to be sacred to their naiad-like sports; the men never ventured this way between four and six in the afternoon.

With one glance at myself in the tiny mirror hanging on the rough board wall, I turned to the door, but with my hand upon the latch I paused. I heard a footstep on the steep graveled path. I heard the splash of oars and the grating of the rowlocks as the boat turned again in its course. I heard a laugh—hers; a voice—his; it said:

"Will you not let me come with you?"

"I do not know. I hardly think you will care to. I am merely idling here, back and forth."

"Let me idle with you!" he pleaded.

"There!" cried she. "I have run ashore on this bit of a green island. Now you sit down upon your shore and we can chat together."

"Ah, but the deep waters are between us," he cried.

I exulted and delighted to know it.

"What of that?" exclaimed Virginia Harrison. "Can we not be friends even so?"

"Friends?" echoed Antony Grey.

"Yes, friends," Virginia Harrison repeated in her soft, low voice.

"No," he answered very quietly, "we cannot be that to each other."

My hand, still upon the latch, trembled as I held my breath.

She was silent. I heard nothing save the little eddying tide that swirled her boat's prow back and forth.

"Virginia"—Antony Grey uttered her name with such a passion of longing as I have never heard in voice of mortal man in all my life, and my grasp tightened on the latch until the frail door shook; I loosened my hold, I fell back into the stifling heat of the little cabin, I clutched the neckband of my garment and tore it free, and so I breathed and panted, and swallowed the sobs that choked me—and bending, listened.

"Virginia," he cried, very low once again, and then she must have raised her eyes to meet his, for he added:

"You know, do you not?"

And then I knew she bowed her head in meek, sweet, splendid assent.

"Come to me, then," cried Antony Grey, all the magnificent manhood in him praying for—her.

I hear the boat grind on the shore; I hear the rowlock strike the oar. I cannot live here! I spring forward stealthily and open the door. He has reached forth his hand and draws the boat to his side; he takes her hands, he takes her face, he takes her in his arms, beneath the deep swamp-willows' shade. He sits beside her. He looks down long and earnestly into her face, and with her gentle, steadfast eyes she looks up at him with fearless wonderment. Antony Grey clasps her hands in his.

"Oh, love," cries he, with rapturous reverence, "we love each other!"

And then the blood dyes all her quiet face crimson, and trembling, she makes a little moan of joy and rest.

I bend far forward, peering into the gathering gloom, struggling for air, more air. I sob passionately. I seem to be losing myself, to be merging into Virginia Harrison, to be there with them. And then—no, no! I feel that sad, strange woman playing on my heart-strings with her cold, thin fingers—playing on my heart-strings until they are like to break.

Oh, who am I? Who is she? I must go to her, struggle with her, vanquish her!

I dash out into the open, and hurry-

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ing along the bank I climb up the path where the rough stones smite my feet. Hark! I hear their voices still; I shall reach them before they have left. I stumble blindly on, and at last I reach the deep swamp-willows' shade. Antony Grey and Virginia Harrison have gone; they are already out on the lake in the little boat, sitting face to face, drinking in the dear-ness of each other, with naught but the dew and the twilight to come between their happy eyes.

I stand upon the shore.

I look at them.

Ah, what shall I do?

I do not know.

What *can* I do?

"Awake?"

"Yes, my faithful Marie," I say to

my maid, "I have slept long enough. Bring me a packet of cigarettes; to be sure, those the prince sent yesterday; and open a bottle of champagne; fill me a glass; another, girl, another!"

I drink to the future, for the past is dead with its Antony Grey, and its dreams, and its rivalries, its heart-aches and bitterness. You, across the room there in the mirror, woman with the tawny hair and azure eyes, fill the glass once more and touch it to mine. Jingle it loud, for we pledge each other, not for love any more, but for oblivion.

"Of course the prince may enter, Marie. Place a chair for his highness.

. . . Good morning, milord; I have been asleep and dreaming."

"Of me?" inquires the prince.

"Of whom else could it be?"



ANTICLIMAX

RED wine, white light, and table spread,
A dreamy music overhead,
Love over all:

Alas! how soon such dear delight
Fades like a phantom from the sight—
Our spirits fall.

Prosaic now, howe'er we will—
The tiresome detail of the bill
Comes as a pall.

E. B.



A REASONABLE REQUEST

MRS. HOYLE—I told the new servant that she must pay for all the things she broke.

MRS. DOYLE—What did she say?

"She said she was willing to do that, but that she wanted wholesale prices."

BELOW STAIRS

(To J. I. B.)

By Gouverneur Morris

I—STUBBERFIELD TO HIS MIRROR

I T 'in't perlite to listen, nor
It 'in't perlite to see;
It 'in't perlite to be perlite
To them that's hunder me.

I knows when Madame is at 'ome,
I knows when she is out,
And wot I knows is all I knows
Or cares to know about.

I stands be'ind the master's chair,
I 'ands 'im that an' this;
And wot I does, I only does,
An' hall I does, I is.

I stands or sits, an' sometimes moves,
But only moves when pressed;
Yet when I moves, oh, then I proves
I moves my werry best.

I sometimes condescends to speak
To Cook or Hadelaide,
But when I speaks I never speaks
Unto the scullery maid.

It is 'er place to waship me
Hin silence from afar;
But Christmas D'y I'll nod to 'er
And ask 'er 'ow she R.

II—COOK TO ALL WHO CHOOSE TO HEAR

I 'AVEN'T time for brekfus' and I 'aven't time to dine,
I 'aven't time to bother if my close is right behine;
I 'aven't time to 'ave a Bo, to buy a 'at or heat,
But the Master an' the Madame is the dust beneath my feet.

I cusses when I chooses, when the swet is hin my highes,
W'en I puts the fowl to roast or sets the covers on the pies.
I cusses whom I chooses, tho' I 'aven't time to choose,
For the Master and the Madame is the dust beneath my shoes.

"One last one, 'Arry—so—good-bye,"
 An' that was hali I 'erd or seed,
 Yet thinks a 'eap and wonders w'y,
 If God is good, 'E tikes no heed,
 But sits aside, while one by one
 'Is flowers withers hin their sun.



A MIXED COMPANY

JANUARY, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December once met by invitation of Father Time. "I have noticed," said Father Time as he benevolently looked around upon the somewhat incongruous assemblage, "that you young people, who are in reality doing the work of the world, are not very well acquainted with one another."

April and May, with their arms locked, skipped forward affectionately.

"They say," said April, "that I'm fickle, and yet I stick to my dear old companion, May, pretty well."

"Still," said June as she slipped forward, "May cares more for me than she does for you."

Her cheeks were red as roses as she spoke. April drooped her head and the tears began to fall, while May instinctively turned away from her toward her more radiant companion.

Father Time smiled.

"Now, my dears," he said, "no rivalry! Of course, you are all companions, more or less, but you go on the principle that two is company and three is a crowd. January and February, for instance, are chummy with each other and with March. I have known May and December to join hands, but not for long. And as for March and August, or April and September, or June and November, why, you all know how hard it has been for them to mingle. Now, what I want you to do is to get acquainted. I want you all to live together for awhile, so that you will know one another better."

January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December formed obediently in line.

"Where do you want us all to go—together?" they chorused.

Father Time waved his hand.

"You may all," he said authoritatively, "pass the next twelve weeks in New York."



THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE

"DO you think she will make him a good wife?"
 "More likely she will make him a good husband."

QUESTIONS OF PRECEDENCE

By Maurice Francis Egan

AN amiable and successful Irishman, who had bought one of the many castles of his ancestors from the English invaders, went back to New York in disgust. A noble but bankrupt lord, having sold him the mortgage and the battlements, half a tower and a great expanse of land, was socially kind; but the new proprietor, who had, in the sixties, raised his cap as a matter of course to all kinds of social superiors, could not endure the English practices of precedence. "I'll let any older man go in to dinner before me," he said, "but I'll stay in no place where a boy of nineteen goes, because he has a title, *anywhere* before me. Not that *I* care; it's all blanked rot—it's the principle of the thing!" It was understood in the circle which he left in Ireland that he was "too Americanized." Perhaps so, but he expressed the feeling of most persons not accustomed to those artificial rules of precedence which make for what may be called, in a narrow sense, "social righteousness."

Those who remember the puzzled hostess in Du Maurier's sketches of English society will recognize this point of view. "I beg pardon," said the puzzled hostess, before dinner, "but will you tell me whether I ought to take your arm or Prince Sulkytoff's or the duke's?" And Lord Bovril hesitates; then he answers: "Well—ah—since you ask me, I must tell you that—ah—as her majesty's representative, I am bound to claim the honor. But I hope you won't for a moment suppose that I'm fool enough—ah—to care *personally* one rap about that sort of thing."

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Even Disraeli, before he was Lord Beaconsfield, was irritated sufficiently to say to a young person who was paired with him at the end of a procession of peers and peeresses: "Well, my boy, *pour vous consoler*, I may say that I can make half a dozen of *them* any day!" After all, in that artless remark, it is evident that the great Disraeli was merely consoling himself.

No process of what is falsely called "Americanization" can do away with the necessity of a fixed code of social forms, and a code which must be taken seriously. It has been remarked that folk apparently devoted to "Jeffersonian" simplicity will go miles to see a duke and duchess. I have the honor to know a young gentlewoman who cannot understand why a person of her exalted sex should courtesy to the wife of the President of the United States. She, nevertheless, bore cold drafts for hours and wafts of rain, preceded by arduous lessons from a dancing-master, that she might appear in the presence of a serene highness of Alte-Lippenberg-Schweinhausen! As to Jeffersonian "simplicity," in the sense that reasonable ceremony should be left out of life, it never existed.

Jefferson did not go against any ceremony that was necessary and dignified, and none of the French nobles at the Court of Louis XVI.—even those still most rigid in adherence to the rules of Madame Etiquette—observed that crudity which, if Jefferson had been what vulgar tradition makes him out to be, would certainly have shown itself. There is no lack of real reverence in American life, but there is cer-

tainly very little indication of it on the surface. This defect will remedy itself as culture becomes more widespread; it now shows itself in the assumed contempt for social forms and the presumption that all great Americans have been careless of social forms. The vital question with us ought to be, not how we appear in the eyes of foreigners, but how we can expunge that self-consciousness, that bravado of vanity, which causes some among us to neglect openly what we inwardly admire.

George Washington was not monarchial; this is a truth that deserves the rank of a truism, and yet no man loved the use of symbols more than he. He was not devoted to the Order of the Cincinnati, though it was aristocratic only in a sense to which no intelligent American ought to object; yet it is related in an old manuscript book of memoirs that he resented very strongly any jest at the expense of that order, whose cross adorned both the Marquis de Lafayette and the Comte de Rochambeau, the latter having received thirty-six eagles and ribbons for his officers. All the misdoings of Madame du Barry, as related on one occasion by an officer of Washington's family, with the circumstances of her death, excited only one exclamation from the manliest of men—"Poor woman!" But when the officer continued to say that at a dinner given by the Comte de Cherveny this ex-favorite had covered M. de Pontigibaud—he was of the Cincinnati—with confusion by laughing at the medal and by saying that one of the most impertinent of her lackeys had brought it back from America, the general used a word or two characterizing the lady today permitted only in the English translation of the Bible. And as to the rules of precedence, the Father of his Country had very strict ideas, as was marked in his courtesies to the gentlemen of France who assisted him.

Even this same Madame du Barry, vulgar as she was, dared never violate the rules that hedged in the dignity of a future queen of France. It is of rec-

ord that Madame du Barry was obliged to endure the snubbing administered by the Dauphiness Marie Antoinette, according to the strictest rules of etiquette, until the Empress Maria Theresa interfered, for her own political ends, and forced the honest young princess to speak to the courtesan. Madame du Barry was delighted, and Versailles made no protest against the crushing of Poland. The very life of a people depended on the recognition by the Dauphiness of France of the position of the mistress of the king. The times had become too refined when everything, from the length of a sword to the "court step" in approaching royalty, was regulated. And yet, when Talleyrand spoke with regret of the completeness of social life under the ancient rule, he knew that traditions of society which had ceremoniousness added much to the ease of the past. That noblewoman who obliged Madame Roland to dine with her servants unconsciously led to the cutting off of a few score heads of her own punctilious class; and when a queen was forced to take cold because no lady present would dare to precede the Duchesse d'Orléans and give her a chemise, it was time to halt.

With us the time to halt is very far off. We have got to that point when a crowd will rise and stand while a band plays "The Star-Spangled Banner" without laughing in fear that somebody else may laugh first. That childlike loyalty which often serves our British cousins in lieu of national morality is not yet ours. Mr. James Whitcomb Riley's "Little White Hearsie" is one of the most popular of poems, but the man who will, without self-consciousness, take off his hat when the mystery of death is passing through a street is rare!

Hardly a year passes in which a dispute does not arise in Washington as to questions that have relative value in the eyes of the cultivated; it causes inextinguishable laughter in the uninitiated. What difference does it make whether the dean of the diplomatic corps is received before the Secretary

of the Department of the Interior on New Year's Day by the President? asks the man in the remote settlement, as he dips his hand into the prunes at the cross-roads grocery shop and sends his tobacco juice at the stovepipe with unerring aim. What difference does it make whether there is a New Year's reception or whether there are ambassadors or ministers or any ceremonial or order of any kind? None, in the opinion of the half-civilized citizen who eats his pie as he pleases and yet who grows hot under the collar if the flag is not publicly respected. He does not realize that official etiquette is one of the means by which his country is made respectable in the eyes of men who know the value of symbols. There are many, not in remote settlements, dressing for dinner occasionally, eating their pie with their forks, who would find life easier if they would consider the use of a fixed order in social life.

In England all social doubts as to where one ought to be are happily settled. Here one frequently has the honor at a social assembly of being in the wrong place. The woman you take to dinner, if she is a multi-millionaire, may object to following the American who has recently married a title; of course *you* do not care, but your partner's delicate sense of propriety must be considered! At present, outside of Washington, the multi-millionaire, if one may judge from those social arbiters, the newspapers, always ranks. Twenty millions ought, of course, to precede only ten, and, as Mrs. Burton Harrison tells us in one of her delectable stories of the rich, dining-rooms are now made only large enough to hold those who have the right to precedence in New York; persons of ten thousand a year cannot be admitted until they have gained the right by close application to the practice of finance.

In Washington the multi-millionaire does not always precede, and this defect in the civilization of the Capital leads to delicate questions. The diplomatic corps, for instance, suffers horribly at times; and the crude American

smiles, even grins at the manifestations of agony. There was a time when Sir Julian Pauncefote, not yet Lord Pauncefote, was inclined to take precedence of the Vice-President of the United States. Not very long ago—and this seems to have been the one occasion on which the diplomatic corps was happy—the judges of the Supreme Court were received by the President after some of the diplomatists had been presented. This was at the reception in honor of the judges, given yearly at the White House. There was a row. Patriotic journals prophesied dark things for the future. But the storm went by. The polite diplomatists—always polite when their claims are admitted—declared that no judge would have objected to the precedence of foreign ambassadors and ministers, but that there were certain attachés, secretaries and that sort of people who *would* push forward. These—*corpo de Bacco!*—were naturally obnoxious.

The diplomatic corps is, as everybody knows, received first by the President on New Year's Day, and it always has precedence by courtesy. The Vice-President is the "heir apparent," and he ranks all other officials. The Chief Justice comes next. The wives of certain senators have not seemed to understand why the Senate should not rank the judges of the Supreme Court. These ladies have sometimes shown veiled dissatisfaction at great functions; their husbands represent States, they have said, while the judges merely represent the Government. It takes them some time to understand the enormous power and prestige of the justices, who are appointed for life, and who, though Presidents may pass, hold the sacred casket of the law aloft and forever.

Strangers in Washington remark that the Vice-President and the Secretary of State never meet at the houses of ambassadors or ministers. The reason is that an ambassador could not very delicately rank the Vice-President at his table when the Secretary of State was present. The Secretary of State is the especial medium of communica-

tion for the ministers with the President, and, naturally, the minister on a social occasion would hesitate about dimming his "glory." This affair of "glory" is most important in Washington, and many a triumphant host and hostess, fresh from the provinces and fearless of results, have seen their hopes decay simply because they were as unfamiliar with its meaning as with the technicalities of the "Almanach de Gotha." A hostess who invites diplomats—not always, by the way, diplomats—runs great risks unless she has studied the personnel of the corps and knows the order of precedence, from that of the dean down. Foreigners do not make mistakes in these matters, and Americans would not if they cared to learn to take them seriously.

When it is remembered that every official in Washington has his special place and that his wife knows to a dot where this special place is, and that every ambassador, minister, attaché and secretary has been accustomed to consider himself as an essential part of the "glory" of his country, the question, in spite of our habit of laughing at everything we do not understand, is not one of mere frivolity.

The greatest offender against "good form"—forgive the phrase!—is the young girl in society—that is, the young girl brought up under what is called the "modern" influence. Her manners are as bad as those of her brother used to be. The freshman and sophomore of today are much better bred than their sisters. Whether it is the discipline of football or the effect of athletics in general or the custom of deference to commands on the field, there is no doubt that the young man knows how to take and hold his place in society much better than the young girl. To see a girl whose mother would raise shrieks of protest if our ambassador at the Court of St. James refused to arrange for her presentation at Court, crowd through a doorway before an older woman, sprawl on a chair in the presence of an ambassadress, and pass

the wife of the President with a cool nod is not an unusual thing. Good manners are necessarily matters of form, and that independence which attempts to emancipate itself from the conventions of civilization is simply a phase of ignorance.

The ingenuous woman, well known in her own State, who arranged a dinner which was to include the Vice-President—from her "home" town—the Secretary of State, the French plenipotentiary, an Italian cardinal, a bishop of the Methodist church and an old marquis who hated the French Republic, rushed on to her fate. "Who will sit at your right?" "My own bishop, of course," said the lady, who was very rich and carried things with a high hand in her own town; "he's our most intimate friend." She was advised to submit a list of the guests to the Vice-President. She refused, with haughtiness. The affair was finally arranged so that three dinners were given: one to the Methodist bishop and his wife—the amiable lady had intended to send her in to dinner with the cardinal—one to the Vice-President and one to the Secretary of State. The old marquis, who was royalist to the finger-tips, would, of course, have been polite in the presence of the representative of the hated republic, but he would never have forgiven the hostess. It was this same woman who afterward made a scene at the Vatican because the guard would not permit her to attend the Pope's Mass—she had asked for an invitation—in a hat and feathers!

A foreign ambassador once gave great offense by asking in advance about his place at the table of an American, who ought to have known better than to be offended. No ambassador or minister with full powers may sit anywhere but in the seat of honor unless the guest of the occasion is of royal blood or the Vice-President. The late novelist, Jokai, was a personage, more of a personage in many eyes than the Austrian ambassador at Washington; but imagine the effect of "ranking" any citizen of the Austrian

Empire when the representative of the Empire was present; and yet to the thoughtless Jokai ought to rank—as if intellect or goodness or any purely personal qualities had anything to do with official or social precedence!

Cardinal Gibbons, who is almost as frugal as the late Cardinal Manning—he has the reputation of dining luxuriously on an apple and a cup of tea—goes out occasionally in Washington; but the hostesses declare that he is the most tactful guest in the world. A cardinal who can meet the ambassador of the Quirinal with inalterable benignity might even safely be asked to a dinner with the Russian and Japanese representatives as guests! Though even these have met since the war and behaved with charming and neutral courtesy. At a dinner given by a member of the Cabinet an ambassadress always ranks. She goes in with the host and her husband with the hostess, unless, of course, the Vice-President is there. When two cardinals were near to each other—the Papal delegate in Washington, the cardinal archbishop in Baltimore—it was supposed that official and social difficulties might arise. Those who knew were aware that this was impossible. The apostolic delegate is not recognized diplomatically, or even quasi-diplomatically, here, though it was different when he was in Canada; and, socially, the two cardinals seldom appeared on the same occasion. No doubt, at any social function, the rule made by King Edward, when Prince of Wales, would be followed, and a cardinal, as a Roman prince, be given precedence, not of official right, but of courtesy. The churchmen, the hostesses say, are much easier to manage than the diplomatists or the representatives of the army and navy. It must be remembered, however, that the ecclesiastic is in the habit of seeing the most important person come last in all processions—and, if he happens to be last, he is first—there is Scriptural warrant for this. Of the Protestant prelates Bishop Potter is the favorite of the

hostesses; he is so easily placed that they have been known to wish that all the admirals were more like him. The only disturbance this amiable bishop is said to have caused during one of his rare and welcome visits to Washington was in the heart of an anxious dissenting lady with a conscience, who consulted her friends as to how she might avoid calling him “your lordship” or “your grace,” as she had scruples against it. She was informed that, as bishops generally signed their Christian names, she could not go wrong by saluting him by his and adding the name of his diocese!

Bishops from Great Britain and Ireland, of the Established Church, have caused some pangs. The Bishops of London, Durham and Winchester follow the younger sons of marquises. All other bishops succeed them in the order of their appointment. After these come the bishops of the now disestablished Irish Church appointed before 1869. You must, to get them right, know the date of their appointment. The Washington hostess who thinks that she can send the aged Bishop of Ballycash to dinner before Lord Ballynasimmon, who is the youngest son of the Marquis of Suir and Shannon, reckons without her guests.

There was a hostess who took in an aged Irish earl before an Eton boy of the English peerage, and nearly every name in the Social Register turned white the following day. It is sometimes hard for the hostess, accustomed to looking at social matters from an American point of view, to avoid very excusable errors. “I expected,” said an old English lady of high rank, who was in the train of a princess traveling incognita, “I expected to be sent in to dinner with a *gentleman*.” A doctor had fallen to her lot, the cleverest physician in Washington and of one of the oldest families in America. “At home,” said the great lady calmly, “doctors are not gentlemen; the Church, the Army, the Navy and the Bar are the only professions we recognize.”

It is a remarkable fact that ladies who hesitate to salute a Protestant bishop as "your lordship" have no hesitation in calling a cardinal "your eminence." Still, after the first shock, most persons compromise on "cardinal" and "bishop." And one hears "M. Jusserand" or "M. Aspiroz" more often than "your excellency"; and "Mr. Minister" does, among the other diplomatists, for a more grandiloquent title. One of the cleverest and most sympathetic of the ministers, Señor Garcia-Merou, has the reputation of maintaining the dignity of his country without once bringing the existence of precedence to the front. There might be provocation for an assertion of his rights, but Señores Garcia-Merou and Calderon have the enviable reputation of never seeming to know when they meet a difficult situation. In this respect they are unlike some of their more impetuous compatriots of South America.

The position of the American officials at the state functions is regulated by law. The Secretary of State succeeds in case of the inability of the President and Vice-President. Then the Secretary of the Treasury; after that the Secretary of War; then the Attorney-General; then the Postmaster-General; then the Secretary of the Navy; then the Secretary of the Interior. Although the wives of these respective officials cannot succeed officially in case of any of the lapses mentioned, they, of course, share in the precedence of their husbands. There is no code for the regulation of the places of ex-Presidents or the wives or daughters of ex-Presidents. Their only consolation is to go abroad, where the relative of an ex-President is not treated as if to be President was to have been wrong.

The question, anxiously agitated for a time, as to the place of the dean of the diplomatic corps—this was before the place of the Vice-President was finally settled—was as nothing to the affliction in at least one

breast when an English archdeacon and an Italian monsignore, cousins, came to Washington for one day. There was an American Protestant dean in town at the same time, who, being a friend of both, had to be asked to dinner. The notes of invitation were readressed a dozen times, until a knowing one announced that a dean is "very reverend" in the Anglican Church, an archdeacon "venerable" and that a monsignore, though not a bishop and only an honorary member of the Papal Household, is "right reverend," and that "monsignor" or "monsignore," by way of colloquial address, if one wants to be a purist, suits him very well. The amiable American dean, being rather "low" church, was willing to go "in" with anybody, so the monsignore was given the place of honor and the bachelor and venerable dean the prettiest women in Washington, and everybody seemed content; but the hostess confessed that she had been unhappy!

Washington is one of the few cities in the United States where money does not count in the order of social precedence, nor does talent or personal charm, though both talent and personal charm, as well as money, count enormously for the real social success that is not marked by precedence.

Ceremony has its value. Life is sometimes made easier and more comfortable by recognizing this; in Washington, where it holds its legitimate place, complicated knots are, by the aid of common sense and good feeling, often cut to the satisfaction of all concerned. Difficulties in precedence that would break the heart of a Spanish grandee are arranged in the twinkling of an eye; and, as it is admitted that the Capital is becoming the most educative of our cities, let us admit, too, that one of its educational advantages is the lesson of restraint, reticence and politeness which it offers. These many of us socially "independent" Americans badly need.



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

By Julia B. Foster

“I T'S no use, Jim; I'm tired of this grind, this nothingness. After the wedding I'm going to Europe and anywhere else. Shut down the mill and give the mine a rest. Even your wife got tired and went off to visit her folks.”

Thus delivering himself Mr. Birney Stowe, owner of the Belle Blue Mine, on the edge of the desert, straightened his tall, spare figure.

“The sound of them stamps'll be like remembered music—a long time a-dyin'!” answered Jim, stroking his knife-blade on the sole of his cowhide boot. “You'll come back after your daughter's weddin' an' come back keen,” he added, with the certainty of a prophet. “The weddin' 'll be a big show, an' I hope you'll do the Belle Blue proud among the honorables. Anyhow, you'll be chief, fer you'll give the bride. They tell me how 't a man gits lonesome fer silence yender, but, Stowe, your silence'll be the poundin' o' them stamps.”

“No,” returned Stowe, like a man that has thought and determined. “No, I'll go on further. I want you to keep your eyes wide, Jim, in Tonopah. Give Tom his plain instruction about telluride, and put it strong to Billy Bobbs about the smelting works in Butte. The rest of the gang may go, as we've agreed. We can pick up hands at any time and uncover that ore when we're ready. Well, I guess that's all. Be good to yourself, Jim. Tell your missis we missed her sunbonnet and calico dress.”

“Hullo!” exclaimed Jim as two figures passed the window. “Old Eagle Eye is on the march, I see, and Mary goes with him, meek as a lamb. Last

night he give her a beating to get her ready. Them bucks is the boss, I tell ye!” he concluded half enviously.

The men rose and watched the Indians as they made trail across the sands. Eagle Eye held himself proudly, and Mary, his squaw, walked in submission behind him. A strap across her forehead steadied upon her back the burden of their worldly effects. The picture was suggestive of the rude and primitive in the family relation.

“Little as my missis is, I couldn't beat her into doin' that fer me,” Jim said, sticking his hands into his pockets. He was a big fellow, and sheepishly suspected that his wife would him round her finger.

“Jim,” returned Mr. Stowe, finger and thumb pinching his chin, “men are by nature brutes. I'm glad civilization has taken just that,” and he nodded toward the retreating Indians, “just that out of us.”

“Oh, I dunno,” answered Jim, with a careless heave of his mountainous shoulders. “Seems as if a man ought to be boss.”

“That's where you're wrong!” Mr. Stowe turned sharply. There was an edge to his voice that unconsciously rasped upon his own ears. Somehow the incident was irritating.

In the evening of the fifth day afterward Mrs. Birney Stowe looked long but without a tremor at the visiting-card which the servant in the hotel had just left with her. Then, partly from habit and yet subtly by design, she surveyed herself in the oval mirror above the mantel. It flashed back the picture of a stately woman with white

hair, dark eyes and straight, black brows. She had not yet put off the gray satin dress worn at the wedding, and jewels sparkled at her throat and in her hair.

"Mr. Birney Stowe," the servant announced.

"Good evening," said Mrs. Stowe, advancing to the centre of the parlor. No automaton's tone ever had the quality of her coldness.

"I'm glad to see you alone, Isabel. All those wedding guests made me feel a stranger." Mr. Stowe came forward and shook his wife's hand. When released it went up to her necklace and fell again.

Mr. Stowe had spoken quickly and directly, like a business man of fifty. His thinning brown hair was pathetically brushed.

"I am well," returned Mrs. Stowe, pushing a chair toward him. As she seated herself opposite the satin dress clung to her figure and the gems gleamed in the strong electric light from the chandelier.

"How long do you intend to stay in town?" she inquired, looking at the toe of her slipper.

"How long? Till tomorrow. Short time, eh? Well, I'm going to try a trip around the world. Your last trip to Europe has agreed with you, and a year abroad may be good for me. By George, Isabel, you look like an empress!" The words were forced from him, and his lips drew in as if they had made a mistake.

A dazzling smile broke the conventional lines of the empress's face.

"Want anything?" continued Mr. Stowe, playing nervously with the locket on his watch-chain. "I've arranged things at the bank, and you can draw as usual. Money's to use, you know. The Belle Blue's paid, hasn't she? Stamped us out a comfortable fortune the last ten years. I'm fond of her as ever. She's never once failed me—eh? Beg your pardon; I——"

"Mama! Papa!" interrupted a round young voice as a girlish young woman darted between the portières.

"Lillian!" exclaimed the two parents, rising in surprise.

"Here's Harry, too. Come in, dear!" said Lillian, drawing a deep breath, and a smiling young man appeared.

"But how—why—?" asked Mrs. Stowe in bewildered disapprobation.

"Well, you see—" Lillian began, fluffing the quantity of fair hair blowing about her head.

"—the driver—" put in Harry, coming forward.

"—took us to the wrong station," concluded Lillian, with both her hands squeezing her father's face into wrinkles. "And the next train is an hour later, so we came back for another good-bye. Tell me truly, papa," she said, standing on tiptoe to bring her face on a level with his, "do we look new?"

"Brand-new—at least you do," replied her father, his blue-gray eyes twinkling. "Your clothes are too good; but Harry, my dear—why, in that plain business suit he looks really married and for a long time."

Lillian paused before she answered: "I chose one of my oldest gowns, but Harry thought that I'd never be his bride again, and so—and so—well, today it began to be my duty to please him."

Mr. Stowe looked wistfully into his daughter's eyes, but his voice was brave as he continued lightly: "That being the case, a grain or two of rice in your hair is nothing, eh?"

"Oh, mama!" cried Lillian. "Really, is there rice? What a mercy we came back! Take it out, take it out; do!"

Mrs. Stowe with fond fingers searched the bird's nest of shining strands, and did, indeed, extract a grain of telltale rice. In another moment her arms stole of themselves round the girlish shoulders, and she drew the bright cheek to her own.

"Mama," announced Lillian proudly, "no one was so admired tonight as you—not even I, the bride. Papa, didn't she look like——?"

"—like herself!" Mr. Stowe finished, with gallantry.

"Ah, you're always the same toward mama! I don't see how you can bear to live away from her," chided Lillian, patting his thin hair. "But, Harry, shouldn't we go now, and really, this time? Good-bye again, dears! We—my husband and I—will write every day. Papa, do, do, do let the mine run itself while you come home to mama. She's going to be lonesome now. No; don't watch us go; it's bad luck. Good-bye, good-bye!"

The portières dropped and left together the beautiful, majestic woman and the tall, thin man, yet in evening dress and with a flower from his daughter's wedding bouquet in his buttonhole.

The two were no longer at ease. Lillian's joyousness and their surprise at her reappearance, the sudden aloneness caused by her final departure, had broken in upon the pretense of their lives.

In some embarrassment, Mrs. Stowe walked to the mirror and made a trifling rearrangement of her sleeve.

Mr. Stowe watched her studiously unconcerned movement.

"Jove, Isabel!" he broke out.

His remark was not an adjuration; it was a hoarse expletive.

The men that worked shift and shift in the Belle Blue had heard that tenseness in his tone when danger threatened, but it had never before offended Mrs. Stowe's ears. Her hand paused with her sleeve half puffed.

"Yes, a fool you've made of me!" and Mr. Stowe strode over to his wife. "And at the last, to bring me here to give away the bride! So that the world shouldn't know! Well, I came. Long ago I swore that I'd never deny you anything. But what have you denied me?"

Mrs. Stowe stood like a statue, and the gems at her throat moved slowly up and down, flashing as they moved.

"The world calls me a model husband," Mr. Stowe sneered. "M'm! Satin and diamonds! London, Paris, Vienna! And then for me to think of sand and sagebrush and the hot blast down in the mine! Ocean steamers

—prairie schooners! Operas—the coyote's serenade! The society of capitals—Indians, greasers and the gang in the mine! You adorn the tale, Isabel; I point a moral."

With a quick gesture he clasped his hands and forced them against his breast as if he could not trust them.

Mrs. Stowe rested her arm on the mantel and bent her handsome head upon her hand. She lowered her eyes, and a wave of color swept over her face.

"After five years, your reproach comes late," she reminded. Her voice caught once as if it begged.

"Reproach? No!" Mr. Stowe answered, and added in bitterness, "a man is chary of tears, but sometimes his heart cries."

"It was a bargain," she reminded again, listening in strained attention for his reply.

"A bargain? And what did I get?" he asked, striding the floor.

"Nothing, for you gave me my liberty and your money—freely, without objection, without comment, question or reserve." Mrs. Stowe's color receded as her pride asserted itself. "I accepted," she resumed, "for it was all that you offered—my liberty and your money!"

"All that I offered?" he repeated, pausing in front of her.

"You were jealous, and you offered me the position of the woman fonder of the world than of home and husband. That has been the pose that I—I assumed. You see the bargain that I got!"

Her tone was scornful again, but she gave him a penetrating look from between her lashes.

He protested passionately. "Isabel, it was never a man. It—it—I think it was the bishop's sleeve," and he laid his nervous fingers upon the many folded covering of her own arm. "It was the—the author's necktie. I was jealous of the outward things that I cannot compass. I could never belong to the trappings that you loved," and his ever-restless hands swept over his evening outfit. "I was

jealous of no man. Ah, how small the petty jealousies seem, after my loneliness!"

He took up his stride again, and the observant woman could see what he was—a man growing old, with sun-reddened face, with eyes sharpened to keenness. A man for men! To plan, to direct, to govern! The air of the broad, energetic West in every movement! From head to foot she thrilled with pride as she saw his mastery.

"Jove, Isabel!" he said again, sharply, like a man forgetting himself. He halted at her side and, seizing her shoulders, brought her face to face with him. The tide that ebbed and flowed in her veins rushed in a great wave into her cheeks. Her breath came quick and deep.

He grasped her ravenously. "The hunger of the starved plant; the longing of the desiccated sands; the thirst of the dry air—now I remember them."

She stood with her head bowed, while at arm's length he rudely pressed her shoulders.

"You shall not!" he declared, his words coming in a loud whisper, "and I will not! This matter is ended. Henceforth, Isabel, you are my wife. If I must live in hell, it shall be for you, on account of you, or in spite of you; but at any rate, with you. Make my home you shall. I've had enough of this dalliance. After five years of whim, we'll live."

A radiance like the shimmering of

a ray of light hovered about Mrs. Stowe and, departing, took with it—the empress! The woman smiled and blushed.

Mr. Stowe in amazement saw the change.

"But it can't be!" he exclaimed wonderingly.

"Birney, don't hold me so far away!" she besought, like a prisoner pleading for mercy.

"Isabel!" he answered, his voice broken and soft.

"My wife," he said by and bye, "tell me why you allowed five years of separation?"

"You—you never till tonight compelled me," she replied, with the glow still in her eyes.

It was late when Mr. Stowe passed through the frescoed hall of the hotel, and he stepped quickly and hummed to himself. "Push it through," he said at the telegraph office as he slid a bit of paper over the sill.

The operator slowly read aloud:

"To Jim Waite, Cold Wells, Arizona:

"Never mind about Tonopah. Call off Billy Bobbs and Tom. Given up trip. Will be on hand soon as possible. Mrs. Stowe with me. Lend us your cabin.

"BIRNEY STOWE."

Suddenly Mr. Stowe looked blankly over the operator's shoulder. The latter turned but saw nothing. As plain as reality Mr. Stowe saw upon the wall two Indians making trail. The man stalked in front and the woman followed.



HIS PRAYER

DOCTOR—I'm afraid your wife will lose her voice.
ENPEC—Let us hope for the best.



REBUKE a wise man and he will love you; but refrain from doing so and he will love you still better.

THE DUENNA

By Algernon Tassin

AS Robert Arne rounded the corner his attention was attracted to a young woman who was standing uncertainly upon the curb. She took a step now this way and now that with an air of vexation. She appeared to be waiting for somebody, and her attitude conveyed a suggestion of a lack of novelty in the situation.

Arne observed her from the corner of his eye—an eye hypocritically engaged in measuring the bland expansiveness of an aldermanic candidate in a saloon window, the nearest anchorage which presented itself to retain him decently in her neighborhood.

She had again paused upon the curb and her glance was dwelling upon him in a whimsical despair. This was so precisely the attitude in which he had first come upon her that the recognition of it checked his fleeting elation in feeling himself the object of such pleasing interest. He was forced to admit to himself that for her he remained only one of the features in the unimportant foreground of the landscape. That he was at least a feature could be inferred from the minor embarrassment with which it was beginning to dawn upon her that his protracted appreciation of the vealy alderman might mean something more than an annoying coincidence.

Her eyes rested upon him in maidenly helplessness, as if she for the first time had discerned in him a possible chivalrous factor. He had a flattered sense of emerging from the landscape with tolerable personal distinctness, and gladly surrendered himself to cir-

cumstance. He felt that another moment would determine her to appeal to him, and involuntarily he straightened his conscious back. Her impatience culminated and she advanced toward him a hesitating step. But again he was the victim of flat disappointment, for her reluctant goal was not himself but the open doorway beyond the swinging half-doors of which was the delaying object of her desires.

She paused. "Ninny! Ninny!" she called seductively.

Arne felt himself in a ridiculous position. He had been aware of a shabby concession to his curiosity in lingering so long; yet now he felt that to go at once would seem actual rudeness. On the other hand, since now she was within three feet of him, it was absurd to devour longer with an air of detachment the face of the alderman in the window. He felt that the only way to extricate himself decently from the situation was to offer his services. He was about to do so with as great an air of spontaneity as he could on the instant summon, when she turned to him with appealing embarrassment not unmixed with humor. But though he felt that she would laugh in reminiscence, she was far from laughing now.

"Oh, would you, please!" she fluttered. "My dog—Ninny! She ran into the barroom, and she's been there a long while!"

Arne's face expressed only the gravity of the situation.

"Certainly!" he said, and dived precipitately through the door.

His haste was the outcome of

mixed emotions; and therefore he was glad to escape publicity.

Within, at the far end of the bar where the free lunch was artfully spread out, he found Ninny—an elderly and fat fox terrier of apparently most respectable antecedents—engaged in wheedling pieces of pretzel from a group of men. She was sitting upon her haunches, like a right-angled triangle, with an air of youthful achievement; her front paws drooping submissively before her and her brown eyes limpid with wistfulness over an alert muzzle. This attitude she interrupted only to catch the pieces as they were tossed to her. Obviously it was an occupation she was willing to prolong indefinitely.

Arne tried to gather her up as one would gather a large and unwieldy package, but she merely changed her location and resumed her attitude. The men roared with laughter. Uncertain of the eventual success of this manoeuvre, even if many times repeated, Arne changed his tactics and proceeded to the strategy of edging her toward the street by a series of intermittent postures. The wily Ninny, however, perceiving that she was being gradually withdrawn from her base of supplies, darted to the extreme edge of the foraging district and again resumed her intrigues. The young man was forced, therefore, into more overt warfare, and had recourse to the familiar process of "shooing." After darting to and fro with surprising dexterity, not indeed scorning to avail herself at times of the unwary widening of his legs, Ninny perceived the helplessness of further strife and sped with a sort of agile waddle into the street.

The young man followed, very red in the face. The young lady had retreated to the curb again, and the unrepentant Ninny darted past her, unmindful of her calls. Her mistress had no time for more than a breathless nod of unspoken gratitude as she hastily pursued her pet.

Two days later Arne encountered

her again walking in the Park with an elderly lady. Behind them Ninny ambled sedately; it was difficult to imagine that she had ever entered a barroom. The younger lady, seeing him, bowed in charming confusion and, as he raised his hat in response, paused slightly as if to indicate a willingness for him to approach. Doubting at once the propriety of this, she was about to start on. But the young man had come to an awkward proximity in the meantime, and to speak seemed inevitable.

"Mother," she said hesitatingly, but with a cordial smile, "this is the gentleman who rescued Ninny the other day."

The elder lady smiled also; Arne did the same; it was a grateful occasion. The young man modestly denied having run any grave danger. They smiled at one another and by mutual consent broke into laughter.

"I'm sorry I had to run away without thanking you. Thank you, so much!" the girl said, between ripples of amusement. "I had been waiting twenty minutes. I don't know what I should have done if you hadn't come to my assistance."

"Does Ninny often go on these—sprees?" he questioned as he fell in beside them as they continued their way.

"Lately she has," the girl admitted. "I can't think how she began it." She looked regretfully at the dog, which was waddling toward a tulip-bed with evident intent. "Ninny! Ninny!" she chided cheerfully.

The elder lady moved hastily after the animal.

"She loves to eat anything red," the young lady explained parenthetically. "At first," she took up again the preceding topic, "she would dart in clandestinely, but now she is shameless. And she stays longer and longer! At first, too, she used to feel my reproaches, but now her whole nature has hardened. She doesn't mind me in the least. I'm glad there's only one barroom in the neighborhood with swinging doors."

"It is a sad spectacle," assented the young man mournfully.

The young lady nodded. "To think at her mature age Ninny should take to drink! But after all, I shouldn't so much mind that——"

"Shouldn't!" interrupted the young man in a shocked echo.

"Well, not so much as other things. But that she should run after such low associates when——"

"That is rather incomprehensible," he put in quickly; "and rather awkward, especially when she drags you down also. One might conceivably form unpleasant acquaintances through such habits."

She looked at him archly. "I know it. But, as I was saying, drink is not the worst of it. I fear it is the free lunch which attracts her. And she is getting so dreadfully fat."

"To say nothing," said he, "of the criticisms that might be suggested to the stranger."

She smiled. "I fear she *is* hungry sometimes," she admitted. "But they told us not to give her anything but dog-biscuits once a day."

"And they do not afford ample range for her imagination, do they? That's probably why she has fallen into this apparent vice—in response to her higher nature, I mean; nothing so gross as physical appetite, but the hunger of the spirit."

"Nevertheless," she summed up practically, feeling herself capable only of admiring this poetic flight from a distance, "other food *is* bad for her."

"Well," he reassured her, "don't mind. It was only pretzels that day. It might have been pâtés or any other of the rich, indigestible foods they give you at free lunches. And pretzels, you know, are a sort of dog-biscuit."

"Are they?" she asked, with eager credulity.

"Oh, yes!" he returned confidently. "They use them at times to determine whether one has hydrophobia or not."

She seemed puzzled — as indeed he would have been if her question had not supplied him with its answer. "Oh! And if one has?"

"Why, then, of course, he turns against water. And that's all the bar-keeper wants."

They both laughed as if he had made a brilliant sally.

"I have no doubt," he hazarded, "that Ninny"—the repetition of the name seemed to throw them still further into delightful intimacy—"drank a great deal of water when you finally got her home?"

"Why, yes," she remembered brightly. "So she did—a great deal."

"Which shows, of course, that she hasn't hydrophobia. Fancy coming from a barroom with such a tremendous thirst! I don't know whether you ought to rejoice or despair."

They both laughed again. The conversation was so casual and so friendly that Arne, who hadn't talked with a girl on this footing since he left home, would willingly have gone on indefinitely in just such a strain of cheerful fatuousness. He began to wonder desperately how he should arrange to put the acquaintance on a less transient basis.

At that moment the girl's mother returned, with Ninny ambling at her heels. The little excursion into the tulip-bed had been attended with excitements. But no one would ever have connected the decorous Ninny with the broken tulip the elderly lady bore in her hand or the two which flamed in her cheeks. Anything so ruffianly seemed far remote from Ninny's conscious deportment.

"Naughty Ninny!" reproved the young lady amiably. "Aren't you ashamed!" She turned to the young man. "Thank you again so much," she said, with a slightly final air.

"My name is Arne—Robert Arne," he said boldly. "And I come from Louisville, Kentucky." Like all Louisvillians, he had been taught when in doubt to play his highest trump.

The young lady gave a little cry of pleasure, while the elder smiled upon him, no longer with vague, impersonal cordiality, but a beam of definite warmth.

"I'm from Tennessee myself," she

said. "We must have many friends in common. My name is Gardiner." She stretched a friendly hand. "And this is my daughter. I thought I recognized your accent."

Arne smiled as pleasantly as if the insinuation flattered him. "And I yours," he returned gallantly. This was manifestly stretching a point, as he had never heard her utter a word up to this time; but he was sure of his ground here, since he knew very well that elderly Southerners in New York pride themselves on retaining what the young ones pride themselves on getting rid of as quickly as possible.

"Come and see us," said Mrs. Gardiner, much pleased, as they walked toward the gate, "and let us talk over our friends."

The first time Arne called both inclination and artfulness made him pursue the topic which was likely to advance most favorably their acquaintance. Indeed, he was not at all unaware that it had already provided a reason for his calling so speedily. He produced a bag from his pocket. Ninny, who beyond a warning yelp when he rang the bell of the apartment had vouchsafed him no recognition whatever and had remained curled in a fat heap upon a pile of cushions, uncurled herself alertly at the rustle of the paper and leaped nimbly to the floor. Here she at once assumed the attitude of a right-angled triangle. Robert laughed aloud; she was so weighty at the base and so pointed at the apex by her sniffing muzzle.

"That's just how she sat in that unholy place," he explained, "where she goes, led by her spiritual passions."

"Isn't she the dear? My dear, dear Ninny!" cried Miss Gardiner rapturously.

Arne discovered subsequently that this attitude of Ninny's always brought forth this ecstatic comment from her mistress, and always with the air of having noticed it for the first time. No wonder, thought he, the artful Ninny is fattening visibly.

"But you mustn't—you mustn't give her any!" she protested. "She isn't allowed to have anything but dog-biscuit."

"Just one!" he begged.

"Well," she said, after a pretense at inward debate, "just one, because you have led her to expect it; and I can't have her confiding nature rudely shocked."

Arne fumbled at the mouth of the bag tantalizingly. The crisp rustling of the paper sounded delicious. Ninny's mouth watered. Arne held a pretzel high in the air, and Ninny gazed at it with two wistful eyes.

"Oh, let her have it, please!" pleaded Miss Gardiner even more prettily. "See how well-bred she is!"

Arne dropped the pretzel. Ninny achieved an astonishing bound and caught it falling. The pretzel snapped in the most appetizing manner. In a second Ninny had resumed her attitude, and all was as if it had never been.

The young man fumbled in the bag again. "No, you must not," interfered Miss Gardiner firmly.

"Only this one," said he. "You see, I have led her to expect it. I can't disappoint her now."

"If I consent—" she began to stipulate.

"But you must," he held laughingly; "otherwise I should become an immoral factor in Ninny's life—I who rescued her from a barroom!"

"Very well," she yielded. "Mind, now! Don't lead her to expect another. Oh, see, isn't she a dear!" she cried rapturously. The pretzel fell, and Ninny, horizontal for a second, again reared herself.

"Do you know why I brought pretzels?" he asked speculatively.

"Because you had found out my dear Ninny adored them? I'm so glad you found it out, because, as you say, they are a kind of dog-biscuit, aren't they?"

"Yes," he said. "Those are my third and my second reasons. But what is my first?"

"I love charades," Miss Gardiner

remarked inconsequentially. "What is your first?"

"My first is an ethical reason, while my second is purely personal and my third is merely rational and material."

"Do you always put your ethical reason first?" asked Miss Gardiner, with innocent gaiety.

"Yes," replied Arne, "when it is the largest. It forms the surest base for the others—like a triangle, you know." His eyes strayed to the appealing Ninny. "Take an illustration," he began argumentatively.

"What is the reason?" she put in hastily.

"I have always believed," said he, "that people go to saloons for what they can't get at home. Now, if we can provide for them harmlessly at home what they get at the saloons under a fictitious and unhealthy excitation, we strike at the root of the evil. We begin a permanent reform. So you see it was with deliberate ethical intent that I brought these pretzels. For the sake of the home and the fire-side we must keep Ninny out of bar-rooms. It is not seemly for an elderly——"

"Oh!" said Miss Gardiner.

"—though comely female, to allow a craving for imaginative food upon social terms to drive her to the depraved."

"Look at the dear!" cried the young lady rapturously. "Give her just one more. She hasn't moved all this time. Hasn't she wonderful poise?"

"That is because," said Arne as he fumbled in the bag, "she so precisely adapts her end to her means."

The tulips in the little park had been replaced by geraniums, which, being of the same moving color, were equally liable to the devastations of Ninny whenever her mistress walked with her that way. But the power of innocent beauty, even when caught red-handed, policemen cannot withstand. Ninny probably never guessed to what she owed her immunity, or if she did she probably considered it simply a part of

the fabric of things whereby it was fit that she should wax and grow.

By the time spring had burst with scarcely any capricious youth at all into the maturity of summer, Ninny had become accustomed to Arne as constant sharer of her mistress's walks.

It was on one of those radiant Sundays in late June when even elderly ladies are convinced that summer has arrived at last, that Miss Gardiner and Ninny and Arne, the latter not unduly weighted down with wraps, started for an outing in the upper park. Today there were only two things to carry—the long thin cushion on which Ninny must be later wooed to slumber—one could easily double it up so that on one's arm it occasioned as little comment, say, as a pair of trousers folded flatly—and the shoulder-cape with which it was necessary to cover Ninny carelessly when entering elevators where dogs were not allowed, and where the unperceptive elevator man could not be induced to see that such a regulation had contemplated only ordinary dogs.

Such an unintelligent elevator man, with such a restricted elevator, was indeed the Charon of Miss Gardiner's own abode—although this, as Arne might ruefully have told you, had not made bribes any the less necessary. It is true that he habitually stepped upon the elevator in a state of incredible bunchiness, but this, as he had soon discovered, was rather to save appearances than bribes, and to prevent fellow-passengers from conceiving that this mysteriously dropsical personage harbored a dog on his premises. To be sure, Ninny was allowed unchallenged passage on the freight elevator, but Miss Gardiner had shrieked aloud when Arne indiscreetly suggested this as a less awkward vehicle.

"My dear, dear Ninny!" she had said, with a gentle but infinite reproach. "To come and go with the freight! How can you suggest such a thing! If you mean that she annoys you——"

"How can you think that?" Arne had interrupted earnestly.

At last, however, they had started on

this balmy Sunday, and the young man, discharging his soul of secrecy, had undraped the nimble Ninny, who longed for frisking. At this timely moment Miss Gardiner discovered that she had forgotten Ninny's street-car permit, and must return for it. Arne, with an alacrity not altogether uninspired by selfish motives, insisted on going himself.

"No," said she. "I am not sure I know where it is myself, but I'm certain mother could never find it."

"Then," he hazarded lamely, "shall we go back for it?"

"Oh, no!" she said, sighing. "I will go. You must hold Ninny or she will run after me."

Arne called the unsuspecting Ninny, who was persuaded to come to him by the simple device of thrusting his hand significantly into his pocket. She was about to strike an attitude when he suddenly bundled her up. Miss Gardiner, selecting this favorable instant, hastened away, as the young man began to stroke his portly charge with a tenderness suspiciously intentional. Ninny struggled to escape and, scenting desertion, yelped vigorously. For ten minutes the passers-by were amused or frightened, according to their temperaments, at the sight of a young man, very red in the face, tight at the lips and active with his arms, wrestling with a bulky dog which sprang and yelped unceasingly in a peculiar high note of agony. Windows were thrown up and directions called out from sympathetic or indignant householders. The general impression was that he was torturing the dog by some peculiar method of his own.

One old lady came hastily out to him, bearing a small pan of water. "I am sure," she said in timid excitement, "this is what he wants."

"Thank you, madam," said Arne, striving to be calm; "I assure you he only wants his own way." And bowing curtly, with as much frosty dignity as the bounding Ninny permitted, he raged savagely up and down the street. When Miss Gardiner returned he released the dog, which sprang upon her

mistress and told her all in loud, affronted barks.

"Isn't it too provoking?" said that young lady. "I had it in my pocket all the time!"

They walked some blocks in silence. In the park, however, Arne regained, under the balmy influence of the day and the intimate consciousness of the sweet beauty beside him, an even geniality of temper which he would have deemed impossible an hour ago. The bucolic delights of the day were many and exquisite, but all can be passed over with the inadequate comment that the engaging Ninny, dimly aware that she had been a dividing influence, brought them tactfully into a sense of common possession, by a wise impartiality of favor and much resource of plausible invention. Even when she fell into the lake, by sheer manipulation, she contrived that they should obtain a community of exciting interest in the rescue; and after a few stertorous wheezes she gamboled away as if proud of so adroit an achievement. It was a day of mutual joys and fond parental cares, and it passed, as is the manner of delightful days, all too quickly.

They were to dine table d'hôte at a capital place near by, much frequented just at that time by professional and amateur bohemians. One could eat either in the rooms or out in the yard *al fresco* under the sparse shade of the one tree, within sound of the tinkling fountain which trickled a tortured and thin cascade over cemented rocks and into a cemented basin. This miniature waterfall was gaily lighted with one blue and one red electric bulb. Arne's prophetic soul divined disaster in the latter; and it was not without artifice that he suggested the surprising and early prevalence of mosquitos. But Miss Gardiner had not drunk her fill of sylvan pleasures and protested at the notion of dining prosaically under a roof. "Besides," she added, "it will be so much nicer for Ninny."

So it was with an uneasy foreboding that Arne headed the little procession

for the yard. Monsieur, however, demurred at the dog.

"But," begged Miss Gardiner, with the pretty appeal which no official higher than an elevator man had ever quite resisted, "she is such a well-behaved dog—in so nice a place as this especially. You will see how still she lies. She will make no trouble. *Je vous assure. S'il vous plaît?*"

Unable to resist these accumulative blandishments, and beholding for himself how sedate and irreproachable this dog really was, monsieur succumbed with courtly grace.

They were rather early, and as yet no others had arrived. This was fortunate, as Ninny no sooner spied the red bulb blooming by the fountain than her dissimulation became apparent. She sprang to the basin and barked hungrily. She seemed almost driven to the desperation of plunging into the flood.

"Ma'amselle! ma'amselle!" cried monsieur reproachfully.

Miss Gardiner directed him a glance of melting helplessness.

"It is only the light," she explained in a gentle flurry. "She always wants to get at anything red. Couldn't you turn it off? Then you would see."

Monsieur was aghast. "But—but—where then would be the effect?"

"Only for a minute," she explained; "to calm her. Once she is reassured I will take care of her."

Mechanically, as if hypnotized, the man did as he was bid. After a protest at such mystifications Ninny became silent again.

"Where shall we sit—here?" asked the young lady of the blushing Arne. She sank into a chair. "The cushion, please," she directed him. Arranging it at her feet she covered it with her skirts. "Come, Ninny, Ninny!" she called, and Ninny curled herself upon the cushion, withdrawn from mortal gaze. "Now," she said to the man, "you can turn it on again."

The dinner, begun with a slight neutrality, progressed into gradual merriment as Arne became more assured of Ninny's continued obscurity.

He felt that the girl's sweet and gentle dignity would be equal to the dog's appearance; yet he regarded the approaching end of their tête-à-tête with even more than his usual reluctance. The little extemporized room was crowded with genial life. Even the elaborate gaiety of the bohemian had a less strenuous note in the soft evening air; overhead was just beginning the level radiance of the full moon. Arne gazed with increasing enchantment into the gracious young face confronting him. If life meant only that they should look so and always into each other's eyes!

It was at the coffee that the awakening came. The pop of a champagne cork roused an answering staccato yelp from the invisible Ninny. All gazed with surprise. It came again, shrill and graphic—obviously from their very midst, and as obviously from a dog. Yet there was no dog to be seen. It suggested a spiritual manifestation. A jocular materialist rose and kneeling upon the ground commanded a sweep of the entire floor. Arne's horrified and guilty glance fell upon his companion, but no shade troubled her sweet, high-bred face.

"Ninny!" said she calmly, addressing air, "you're naughty."

In the hush which had fallen her words were distinctly heard by all. They looked at each other questioningly. Ninny, under her many coverings, must have divined electrically that she was making a sensation. She sprang to her feet and swirled into the open with flattered barks. Her attention was immediately claimed by the red bulb, and she challenged it exuberantly through all the gamut of a nature frankly emotional.

Miss Gardiner rose with quiet celerity. "I do not care for coffee," she said, "do you? Come, Ninny." She moved without haste and without uncertainty from the room. Arrived outside she turned to Arne as if nothing had happened. "Oh, you have forgotten Ninny's cushion. Won't you please get it?"

Then for the first time the young

man betrayed the cloven hoof. "Not for worlds!" he answered warmly.

She looked at him in gentle bewilderment. It was as if she perceived the beginning of disillusionment. Arne repeated his hasty speech. "I will send the waiter for it." He sought to retrieve himself lamely.

That functionary was just coming up. "Ma'amselle has left this," he began. The young man stretched out his hand.

"Give it to me, please," Miss Gardiner intervened, with icy graciousness of manner. She placed it upon her arm with all the proud loyalty with which one enrolls oneself under a banner. She moved quietly away.

When they were again in the park Arne suggested humbly that they sit for a moment. She sank mutely upon the bench which he indicated.

He began awkwardly: "I am sorry if I was rude." She was silent, her head pathetically poised; the little hand which fondled Ninny's ear seemed to be making gentle reprisals for his outrageous treatment. "Won't you forgive me?"

She looked fixedly out into the night. "What I cannot forgive," she faltered, "is your systematic deception. You have always pretended to care for her, and you led her to be so fond of you. You have deceived us both; and not impulsively, but through a plan. It is that which hurts."

"No, no!" he tenderly protested.

"Yes. You knew how much I cared, and you have been willing to amuse yourself at the expense of that. I see it all now so plainly."

"But it isn't so," he remonstrated earnestly. "Indeed it isn't."

She turned misty eyes upon him. "You cannot—after the little glimpse you gave me just now of your real feelings—have the effrontery to say that you have cared for her all along?" He was silent. "After deliberately leading me to think so," she pursued. "But that is not the principal thing. It is that you should have been willing to wound me through what you knew was the object of my tenderest affec-

tion, through what was all the world to me. That is the unforgettable thing."

Ninny, suddenly developing a desire for sleep, sprang upon the bench and cuddled against the young man's leg, her confiding nose in his hand.

The girl started, stung. The luminous mist cleared from her eyes, revealing horror.

"Oh!" she cried, with a shudder. Instinctively she leaned forward and, scooping up the dog, clasped her to her breast with both arms and fled wildly down the path and into the street.

Arne hesitated for a dumfounded instant and then sprang after her. But he was too late; the night had swallowed her up. After pacing vainly to and fro he returned to the bench and sat down to bitter meditations. It is easy for a self-respecting young man, smarting under the sense of having become for some time an appendage to a beloved's dog and with a lively memory of many tragic episodes sustained in the latter's behalf; and, having endured finally the desertion of that beloved in flight so precipitate as to suggest intolerable insult and even cruelty to the passer-by and provide food for official speculation to a pausing policeman—it is easy for a young man so tried to work himself through stages of distress, humiliation and chagrin into a fury of sardonic indignation. Finally he, too, sprang from the bench. "This is the limit!" he said in the clenched utterance of young men when pushed to the extreme of endurance.

His cold eye caught an object upon the seat. It was Ninny's abandoned cushion. He picked it up and folded it mechanically into the flat, familiar parcel. Seeing that he had done so, he threw it violently down upon the ground. In a few moments, however, he picked it up again, and, arranging it in the customary manner, as if taking a stroll toward his tailor's, he strode rapidly out into the street.

Three weeks had gone by and she had made no sign. He, meanwhile,

had passed through all the usual actions and reactions of hardening pride; but the result of each engagement was stubborn withdrawal without surrender. "It is her place!" he justified himself fiercely.

Yet, in spite of obvious righteousness, these three weeks had been weeks of misery. He resumed his tasteless bachelor haunts and habits. He missed his daily parental interludes, with all their sweet and subtle admissions. Although he longed intensely for a chance encounter, he resolutely walked in alien regions. It did not occur to him that by the same processes she had reached the same conclusion and had changed her region also; that consequently, while they thought of each other as three blocks away, pacing lonely parallels which should never meet, they were in reality separated by six blocks.

It was a month later when Arne, relapsed into confirmed misogyny, stood in the barroom where he had first encountered the source of all his joys and woes. He was drinking, not recklessly or defiantly, but with all the hopelessness of habit, his daily glass of beer. He had no conscious thoughts, gloomy or otherwise, and it was quite without ironic introspection that he reached for a pretzel. Hearing a little wet sound at his feet, he looked down and beheld Ninny, reared into a right-angled triangle, eying him wistfully, through pools of limpid brown. She smacked her lips as if gloating upon the prospect of breaking a long abstinence.

He tossed the pretzel into the air. As Ninny sprang for it the swinging doors opened to someone entering, and the young man distinctly saw without, upon the pavement, Miss Gardiner. In

that instant she saw him too, just as the doors, swinging less widely, shut off the mutual disclosure. Ninny had despatched the pretzel in the usual incredible moment and resumed her appealing attitude. He scooped her up suddenly and ran out upon the sidewalk. Miss Gardiner, when she saw him, drew herself up like a small, offended goddess. He threw Ninny into her arms.

"Nell!" he said.

"You!" she uttered chaotically. "You—have been feeding my dog!"

"Nell!" he said again.

"In that place!" she gasped in the same tone.

"I will feed her in your own place—if you will let me," he said, with bold gentleness.

Miss Gardiner clasped Ninny to her breast. Two tears fell upon the dog's sniffing muzzle, which she resented with a protesting tongue.

"Will you?" he pursued. "I love you and I love Ninny, and I want to hold a dearer relation to you both." The sentient Ninny punctuated his declaration with joyous barks and struggled for freedom. "May I?" he asked again.

"Yes," she faltered. "That is—I mean—you can feed my Ninny if you want to. She—we have both missed you so——"

Ninny, unable longer to contain her joy, squirmed free with a mighty effort. She followed them with crazy barks as they entered the little park. There, upon a convenient bench, the young man surreptitiously took the young lady's hand, while Ninny went whirling mad.

"Naughty Ninny!" said her mistress happily. "You are a disgrace to your sex!"



INBORN

ADAM—What are you doing to that fig leaf?

EVE—Altering it, of course. It's all out of style.

WHEN YOU CARE FOR A GIRL

GEE! ain't it funny the things thet you do,
 An' gee, ain't it funny thet life seems so new,
 An' how yer ambition has suddenly grew,
 When you care for a girl!

An' then you don't care to be stayin' out late,
 An' your home-goin' always is sober an' straight,
 An' your mind's always thinkin' o' Wednesday night's date,
 When you care for a girl!

Never before had you owned a clothes-brush;
 No longer you say to the married man, "Tush!"
 An' you find out how easy it is to talk mush,
 When you care for a girl!

My! how you hated to carry a shawl!
 Now you'd lug bundles all day till you fall;
 You even say "Music," when kids start to bawl,
 When you care for a girl!

Flowers were things that you'd never prefer;
 Now every rosebud reminds you o' her.
 Yes, things as they is ain't like things as they were
 When you care for a girl!

JOHN EDWARD HAZZARD.



AN IMPOSSIBILITY

SAPPLEY—Why won't you mawwy me? I ask you to give me some weason.
 MISS R. CASTE—Sir, you are asking me to give you that which nature
 denied you!



AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY

MRS. READE—The paper tells of a girl who lived some time without a pulse.
 READE—Well, what does anybody want a pulse for? It's only another
 thing besides the pocketbook for the doctor to feel.

LE FARDEAU IMPÉRIAL

By Jacques Constant

N'ACCUSEZ pas le premier cham-
bellan; il n'a fait qu'exécuter
sa consigne. C'est moi qui
avais donné l'ordre de ne pas vous
recevoir.

— ...

— Cette mesure a vivement blessé
votre orgueil, je le sais. Croyez bien
que je fus le plus cruellement puni.
Il m'a fallu imposer silence à mon cœur
de grand-père pour rester un mois sans
vous voir.

— ...

— Vous le déplorez d'autant plus,
dites-vous, que vous aviez à m'entre-
tenir de choses sérieuses. Mais, com-
prenez-le donc, mon pauvre Othon:
c'est justement pour éviter d'en parler
que j'éluais votre visite. Êtes-vous
le seul à la cour à n'avoir pas saisi la
signification de mon attitude? J'ai
voulu vous témoigner publiquement
que j'étais instruit de vos projets et
que je les blâmais. J'avais pensé
qu'éclairé sur mes intentions, vous
vous épargneriez une démarche inutile
et pénible pour tous deux.

— ...

— Vous avez réfléchi et vous persis-
tez à provoquer une explication. Oh!
oh! le mal est plus grand que je ne
l'imaginai. Eh bien! je vous écoute.

— ...

— Inutile de me fournir de plus amples
détails. Je connais tout cela par le
menu. Le scandale de votre idylle s'est,
d'ailleurs, ébruité dans tout l'empire.
Vous aimez Caroline Adler, la fille de
l'orfèvre de la Ringstrasse, auquel vous
vous êtes donné pour un officier de la
garde, le comte de Breiningen. Comme
la demoiselle est intrigante...

— ...

— ... Ou vertueuse, si vous préférez,
elle s'est bien gardée de devenir votre
maîtresse.

— ...

— Vous ne le lui avez pas proposé!
Mais c'est le seul tort que vous avez eu.

— ...

— Mon cher Othon, la morale vulgaire
n'est pas applicable aux têtes couron-
nées.

Donc, votre amour croissant en pro-
portion de la réserve et de la résistance
de Caroline, dans un accès d'honnê-
teté chevaleresque vous avez levé le
voile de votre incognito. J'ai, d'ail-
leurs, d'excellentes raisons de croire
que les Adler l'avaient depuis long-
temps percé à jour. Quoi qu'il en soit,
en apprenant qu'elle avait devant elle
Othon de Abstaufen, prince de Macé-
donie, la fillette s'est mise à sangloter,
la mère a paru frappée de la foudre, et
le père s'est jeté à vos genoux en vous
suppliant de renoncer à vos desseins,
qui ne pouvaient qu'attirer ma colère
sur leur maison.

Naturellement, vous avez protesté
de la pureté de vos intentions, puis vous
avez échangé les anneaux de fiançailles;
vous avez juré solennellement d'épou-
ser Mlle Adler, et s'il se fût trouvé là
quelque prêtre peu scrupuleux pour
célébrer un mariage de complaisance,
je ne doute pas que vous eussiez mis
votre projet à exécution. Mais le bon-
homme Adler, qui est un commerçant
avisé, s'est rappelé l'inéluctable néces-
sité de mon consentement et a très
respectueusement douché votre enthousiasme. Là-dessus, vous avez promis
de m'aviser dès le lendemain, et vous

vous êtes fait fort de vaincre tous les obstacles. Le lendemain, vous avez trouvé porte close.

— ...

— Par qui je suis si exactement renseigné? Par les rapports de police, tout simplement. Vous n'ignorez pas que M. Baumgarten, notre distingué ministre de l'intérieur, nous fait espionner par des agents secrets. Chaque matin, il me communique les fiches qui vous intéressent. Il serait plaisant qu'il vous donnât connaissance de celles qui me concernent.

— ...

— C'est une boutade. Il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que vos actes ont été fidèlement enregistrés, ce qui était d'autant plus facile que nous ne les dissimuliez nullement.

— ...

— Vous ne trouvez rien de reprehensible à votre conduite. J'estime, moi, que vous êtes infiniment coupable parce que vous vous êtes rendu ridicule.

— ...

— Eh oui! c'est ridicule pour un prince d'être amoureux comme un collégien et de filer le parfait amour avec une petite fille de rien du tout. Soyez-en persuadé, tout le monde a trouvé déplacé que l'héritier du trône d'Illyrie passe ses journées à deviser de bleuettes dans l'arrière-boutique d'un orfèvre, au lieu de cavalcader à la tête de son régiment ou de se plonger dans l'étude des réformes sociales. Notez que, personnellement, je sacrifierais tous les traités d'économie politique pour le charme de deux grands yeux bleus. Mais, que diable! il ne faut pas que nous laissions deviner de pareilles faiblesses à la multitude. Je vous l'ai répété souvent, Othon, le peuple qui est simple vous place sur un piédestal. A travers les fumées de son imagination, il se représente les rois comme des idoles impassibles, comme des êtres surhumains. Ce n'est pas qu'il nous croie parfaits; il nous juge plus volontiers méchants et cruels, mais il nous attribue des dégradations abominables, des vices monstrueux. Quand

il s'aperçoit par hasard que nous sommes des hommes comme les autres, que nous avons les mêmes passions, les mêmes défauts, les mêmes qualités, il s'indigne de nous obéir. Sa crainte, sa soumission, se changent en haine, en mépris, en révolte.

De sorte qu'il vaut mieux, pour un prince, être mauvais, despotique, injuste, que de posséder de solides vertus mais de ne savoir pas en imposer à la foule par l'apparat et la représentation.

Voilà pourquoi, mon enfant, votre aventure trop banale a terni votre prestige et vous a diminué aux yeux de la masse. Il m'a été facile de mesurer à l'ironie des journaux hostiles le tort qu'elle vous a fait.

Quel besoin aviez-vous de mêler les parents à cette histoire? Ces Adler sont de riches bourgeois arrogants et vaniteux dont vous n'obtiendrez aucune complaisance et qui s'ingénieront à nous jouer quelque vilain tour.

— ...

— Que la jeune fille ait été de bonne foi, je n'en disconviens nullement. A dix-neuf ans, on est toujours romanesque et comme elle est fort jolie...

— ...

— Je ne l'ai jamais vue, mais j'ai sa photographie jointe à votre dossier.

— ...

— Puisqu'elle vous aime tant, il fallait agir auprès d'elle seule. Pourquoi n'avoir pas confié à Strindberg, notre chambellan, votre secret? Il est fort adroit et d'une discrétion éprouvée. Avec quelques billets de mille...

— ...

— J'insulte Mlle Adler? Alors, si sa vertu est d'une telle intransigence, il ne vous reste qu'un parti à prendre: y renoncer.

— ...

— Comment, jamais? Après tout ce que je viens de vous dire, vous persistez à l'épouser. Ah! j'avais raison de prévoir la funeste obstination de notre race! Mais vous ne pouvez pas vous passer de mon consentement et je vous le refuse.

— ...

— Pourquoi? Parce que vous êtes mon héritier, parce que dans quelques années, demain peut-être, vous serez empereur et que Caroline Adler ne peut, aux termes de la Constitution, devenir impératrice. D'ailleurs, vous oubliez que vous êtes fiancé à votre cousine Gertrude, la fille du roi de Souabe...

— ...

— Je conçois que vous ne l'aimiez pas. Elle est laide, noire et louche un peu. Je regrette que la nature l'ait créée telle. Mais, hélas! la beauté devient accessoire quand il s'agit de la raison d'État et de l'intérêt supérieur des dynasties. En épousant Gertrude, vous vous assurez une puissante alliance vivement recherchée par les autres cours. L'histoire nous apprend, en effet, qu'il est nécessaire que la Souabe soit notre alliée pour ne pas être notre ennemie. Nos diplomates ont négocié de longue main cette union qui cimentera l'amitié des deux nations.

— ...

— La sécurité de votre pays exige ce sacrifice. Il est pénible, certes, mais notre naissance nous impose de lourds devoirs. Un prince doit songer au bonheur de tous avant de se préoccuper du sien.

— ...

— Si la couronne semble un pesant fardeau pour vos vingt-cinq ans, que devrais-je dire, moi, qui ai trois fois votre âge? Croyez-vous que je ne préférerais pas être un bourgeois qui vit familialement des jours obscurs et calmes? Bien des fois, j'ai envié le sort des petits boutiquiers assis sur le pas de leur porte en calotte grecque et en chaussons et qui lisent tranquillement les feuilles de l'opposition tandis que la ménagère dresse le couvert pour le repas du soir. Savez-vous, Othon, que souvent j'ai désiré troquer mon sceptre contre la gaule d'un des pêcheurs qui pullulent au bord du fleuve? Ce plaisir inoffensif m'est interdit. L'empereur pêchant à la ligne! Vous voyez d'ici les caricatures des illustrés!

— ...

— Vous avez l'intention d'abandon-

ner vos droits au trône! C'est impossible. Vous disparu, notre race est éteinte. Qui régnera sur l'Illyrie?

— ...

— Non, les peuples ne peuvent pas se gouverner eux-mêmes.

— ...

— Cette révolution que vous prévoyez et qui peut nous chasser du pouvoir, n'est pas encore née. Je ne nie pas que les temps soient difficiles. Les socialistes gagnent du terrain, l'obstruction augmente au Parlement. Les anarchistes s'agitent. Dans trois réunions secrètes, on a voté ma mort. Qu'importe. Si notre poste est dangereux, c'est une raison pour ne pas l'abandonner. Dieu a désigné notre famille pour conduire les peuples vers le terme obscur qu'il a fixé, il ne nous appartient pas de nous soustraire à ses desseins.

— ...

— Seriez-vous lâche, Othon? Que penseriez-vous d'un capitaine qui abandonnerait son navire parce qu'il pressent la tempête? Je vous en prie, mon enfant, la passion ne peut vous aveugler au point de vous faire commettre une irréparable folie. Si les devoirs envers votre pays, envers le passé de votre race ne peuvent vous arrêter, songez du moins au nouveau chagrin que vous allez infliger à votre grand-père. N'ai-je donc pas eu, au cours de ma vie, assez de tragédies et de scandales? N'ai-je pas été assez cruellement frappé dans mes enfants? Pierre et Sigismond, emportés en quelques jours par la maladie; Jean, mon aîné, noyé accidentellement; votre père, Georges, tué à la chasse à la suite de circonstances dont je ne pu éclaircir le mystère. Enfin, votre oncle, Karl, volontairement disparu depuis vingt ans, et qui promène vers quelque désert lointain son dégoût de la vie et du pouvoir. Quant à vos tantes, l'une abrutie de dévotion, est entrée dans les ordres, et l'autre, mettant comme vous son amour au-dessus de sa dignité, parcourt le monde en compagnie d'un chanteur. Et voilà que vous aussi, Othon, le dernier des Abstaufen, vous en qui j'ai placé mon suprême espoir,

vous voulez vous enfuir comme un malfaiteur de ce trône où vous avez le droit de vous asseoir, m'abandonner, vieux et triste, dans la solitude de ce palais, parmi les vastes salles peuplées des fantômes de tous mes morts.

— ...

— Othon, vous n'avez pas de cœur. Rien de ce qui n'est pas cette fille ne peut vous émouvoir. Prenez garde, je vous suppliais, je puis exiger.

— ...

— Moi aussi, mes résolutions sont inébranlables. Jamais vous n'épouserez Caroline Adler tant que je vivrai. Et, dès ce soir, je vous défends de remettre les pieds chez elle.

— ...

— Othon, vous me bravez. Vous oubliez le respect que vous devez à mes cheveux blancs. Malheur à elle, si vous n'exécutez pas mes ordres.

— ...

— Craignez d'apprendre ce que je veux dire. Décidément, j'ai eu tort d'être trop bon et d'arrêter...

Que désirez-vous, Strindberg? Je ne vous ai pas appelé. Un pli urgent? C'est bien, vous pouvez vous retirer.

Oh! Caroline Adler est morte subitement il y a une heure!

— ...

— Mais, Othon, je vous assure... je... Non, c'est impossible. J'avais défendu expressément... Oh! la pauvre fille! A moins que... dans un excès de zèle... on ait devancé mes intentions.

— ...

— Ne prononcez pas ce gros mot d'empoisonnement et calmez-vous, Othon. Après tout, il vaut peut-être mieux qu'il en soit ainsi. Pleurez, mon enfant, pleurez! Comme il est pesant, le fardeau impérial!



AN OLD BOOK

BETWEEN its yellow leaves is pressed
 The sweetness of the years;
 Lo! here a purple violet
 Has stained them with her tears,
 And here the powdered petals breathe
 A delicate perfume,
 The haunting spirit of a rose
 That perished in its bloom.

An autumn leaf, a spray of fern
 From summer's tangled dell,
 And like a *finis* at the end
 A withered immortelle.
 Sad is the tale the book contains,
 But sadder still, I ween,
 The old romance of love and pain
 That lies in dust between.

MINNA IRVING.



GENEROUS

"SO her husband is dead! Did he leave her much?"
 "Yes; every night."

THE STALKING HORSE

By Van Tassel Sutphen

MRS. CHASE, in dressing-robe and slippers, contemplated the sea-coal fire with dreamy content. How good it was to get out of one's stiff clothes and have plenty of time in which to do nothing whatever! And what an astonishing touch Elise had with a brush and comb—oh, if such a treasure of a maid were really her own! Mrs. Chase turned her head this way and that to get the full value of those comforting ministrations; if she had been a cat she would have purred loudly.

There was a knock at the door connecting with an adjoining room. "May I come in?" asked Vally Thayer, and followed the words in person. The light frown that had momentarily contracted Mrs. Chase's countenance was mysteriously replaced by a welcoming smile, a process akin to that of the familiar dissolving view.

"Yes, do," she answered amiably. Miss Thayer found a low chair on the opposite side of the fireplace and comfortably disposed herself therein.

"What a lot of hair you have!" she remarked, with frank admiration.

Mrs. Chase sighed. "An expensive luxury, my dear, when you can't afford a maid to care for it; something like having hereditary gout and no cellar with which to keep it up." She laughed jarringly. "Really, I ought never to visit if I had any regard for my peace of mind. A week here at the Towers is enough to poison my existence for six months."

Miss Thayer flushed and murmured an inarticulate nothing; she had always possessed and enjoyed the little luxuries of life without thinking much about

them. Now, however, the consciousness seemed a guilty one.

"That will do," said Mrs. Chase. She jumped up with a little yawn and stretched herself unaffectedly. Then she dropped down on the big white bearskin rug and kicked away her slippers—but no, the phrase is an ungraceful one and implies the same of the act; with Mrs. Chase the process was rather a disengagement—artistic, of course, like everything else that she did.

"Give me that armful of pillows," she commanded. "Behind my back—so. You can go now, Elise. The hot water at ten, as usual." The maid courtesied and retired. Mrs. Chase looked up at her guest with sleepy, half-closed eyes. "They all call me Pussy," she murmured. "And they are nearer right than they think."

Miss Thayer made a gesture of dissent; this side of her friend's character was not unknown to her, but she preferred to disbelieve in its reality. "Don't, Lisa," she said.

"But I *am* a cat," returned Mrs. Chase, with quiet conviction. It amused her to arouse this zealous partisanship; there was undeniable piquancy in using truth itself as a screen, and the real face is, after all, the most impenetrable of masks. "Beware of my claws, Vally, if ever we chance to hunt upon the same trail."

Miss Thayer preferred to change the subject. "They tell me that this is the largest house party they have ever had here," she said. "We could manage a respectable parterre circle of our own, if need be."

"The queen bee is sure to be well

attended whenever she chooses to go afield. Tell me, Vally, what does it feel like to be the MacGregor and always sit at the head of the table?"

"Lisa! You are too absurd."

"The ball at your foot and every man holding out his hand—both hands. The prospect is too dazzling for a widow of uncertain age and still more uncertain future to contemplate with equanimity. Your innumerable conquests——"

"Conquests!" repeated the girl scornfully. "But that implies a contest, and these gentlemen make it a point of honor to lay down their arms without firing a gun."

"Still, they are useful in the ensemble—captives at the chariot wheels. Don't attempt to be blasé with me, miss; remember that you've got your hair down and it is half-after one o'clock in the morning. You are a woman and every scalp counts——"

"For just nothing; it's horrid of you, Lisa, to talk this way."

"So? Then the wind does blow contrary at times for even the universally fortunate Miss Valentine Thayer? I have it! Mordecai sits at the gate."

"Mordecai?"

"Otherwise known as the 'Eligible.' In language to be understood of the common people—Mr. Graeme Hamilton."

"So you think that Mr. Hamilton is my crumpled roseleaf. He certainly pays me no attention whatever. I like him all the better for it."

"Ah, but it's a question of rivalry, my queen, and that is the one thing which, in your heart of hearts, you will never brook. Mr. Hamilton serves, as his mistress, no less a personage than Star-eyed Science. And he is faithful—unto death."

"How ridiculous you can be, Lisa! I've heard that he went in for things rather seriously."

"The whole gamut. How to tell the cut flowers—prices included—and the Brooklyn Bridge trolley-cars; wild life among the roof-gardens; North River ferryboats that I have known—you can't mention a single one of the

polite and royal roads to learning that Mr. Hamilton has not traveled over and over again. Just at present his line is photography—not the push-button kind, if you please, but the real, professional article. He has dozens of cameras and he spends a fortune for lenses—perfectly insane upon the subject."

"I might ask him to take my tin-type," said Miss Thayer, with an expression wholly innocent.

"Not if you value it. Don't you understand, my dear, that this is the important business of life with Mr. Hamilton? They say that he has a marvelous collection of pictures—they say, I repeat, for no one has actually seen them. Isn't it absurd?"

"What—to have a serious interest in something that is something? I think it is perfectly splendid. *He doesn't have to play bridge.*"

"If I could believe that I'd go in for it myself. Fortunate and happy Mr. Hamilton!"

"He is independent, certainly."

"Of everything and everybody—including the adorable Miss Thayer."

"I am going to bed," announced that young woman, with sudden decision. "Do you know that it is after two o'clock, Lisa Chase?"

"Really! Well, good night, child. So lovely of you to happen in. By the way, you can get one of those four-by-five cameras in the village—at Henderson's—for only twelve dollars."

To this suggestion Miss Thayer made no reply unless the abrupt closing of the door could be construed into a negative one. Mrs. Chase, with an enigmatical smile, settled back among her pillows.

Miss Thayer was a surprisingly early riser the next morning, and she was on the porch when Carson drove past in the mail cart on his way to the post-office.

"Won't you take me to the village?" she called out, and the groom, somewhat astonished but ready—with every one else—to oblige Miss Thayer in all things, assented promptly. "I want to make a purchase at Henderson's and I

haven't had my breakfast," she explained smilingly.

Carson made the trip in remarkably fast time.

Mr. Graeme Hamilton, laden down with camera box, tripod and plate-carrier, stopped short to behold an unwonted spectacle, that of a very pretty girl wrestling with the mysteries of a commercial photographic apparatus. "Why, it's Miss Thayer!" he said aloud, and hurried on. "What is the trouble?" he asked kindly.

Miss Thayer turned with just the suspicion of a blush on her fair cheeks. "Oh, Mr. Hamilton!" she exclaimed. In her hand she held the rubber compression bulb operating the trigger. "I can't get this—this atomizer to work," she explained plaintively.

Graeme Hamilton smiled. "You haven't set the shutter," he said. "This way—don't you see?"

Miss Thayer blushed again. "I'm only a beginner," she faltered. "So stupid of me!"

"Not at all. What were you thinking of taking? Oh, yes; that vista through the pines to the water. Very pretty. Now you want your largest stop, and the time—let me see. It's a trifle cloudy and the light at this time of year is lacking in the actinic rays—compared to a summer day, you understand. We'll try it at three-quarters of a second. How about your focus? You must get the picture in the finder—that's it. Now hold the camera perfectly steady, pressed against the body. Be sure it's level; then squeeze the bulb gently. Do you think you understand?"

"Oh, yes, and thank you so much. Shall I take the picture now?"

"You ought to have some life in it. I'll go and stand by the stile. Just call to me when you are ready."

Miss Thayer, trembling with excitement, held the camera at charge; she gazed intently into the finder and was presently gratified to discover therein the knickerbocker presentment of her instructor. "Now," she called, and pressed the bulb.

Mr. Hamilton returned and took the camera into his own hands.

"Immediately after making an exposure," he explained, "you should turn the next section of film into position. Otherwise you are sure to forget and try to take two pictures on the same plate. You twist this key until the number '2' appears in the little red window at the back, and so on for every succeeding picture until the reel is run off."

Miss Thayer listened with eager interest. "How fascinating!" she exclaimed. "I don't wonder that it should be something of a—er—fad with you. And what a beautiful camera you have!—there must be all sorts of things to learn about that extraordinary mechanism."

"Iris diaphragms and wide-angle lenses? Oh, yes; I possess all the refinements of the art. Then there is work with the telephoto attachment—that is fascinating!"

"Do you develop your own—what is it you call them?—oh, negatives?"

Mr. Hamilton hesitated perceptibly. "I used to," he said.

"If only it didn't stain your fingers so horribly. But here I am taking up your time, when, of course, you have unnumbered photographic projects in mind. Please go and leave me to my own devices. I shall manage beautifully now."

Mr. Hamilton surveyed the clouding sky doubtfully. "It isn't a very good light," he said, "and I haven't my number two lens along. I think I'd rather sit here and smoke a pipe."

The pine needles were thick and soft and the air was delicious for all that it was mid-February and a cloudy day. But this was South Carolina and the heart of the wonderful, fragrant, long-leaved pine woods. This is the true outdoors where one never consciously thinks of either heat or cold.

The conversation, at the beginning vigorously restricted to subjects of purely photographic import, had gradually found a wider channel, and "hypo" and "solio" print were for-

gotten. Miss Thayer looked at her watch and exclaimed:

"It is nearly luncheon-time! What could we have been thinking of? A whole morning wasted—of course, I mean for you, m'sieu'."

"Pardon me," said Hamilton ponderously. "The proper study of mankind is woman. Only I hadn't realized the truth of that observation before, and so took up with the inferior substitute of photography."

"Really, Mr. Graeme Hamilton, you are coming on," said Miss Thayer—mentally. Outwardly she smiled a little dreamily and Hamilton found the expression tremendously fetching. They rose to their feet.

"But before we go," said Miss Thayer, "I want you to do something for me. You are to take a picture of that same view toward the lake with this superlative camera of yours and I will be the life, as you call it. I shall have a useful object-lesson in comparing the two prints."

Again that barely perceptible hesitation on the part of Mr. Graeme Hamilton; he even started on an excuse, but she cut him short.

"Why, there's the sun out again. Please do, Mr. Hamilton."

He had no recourse but to obey; the exposure was duly made and they started for the house still engaged in amicable converse.

Mrs. Chase, preparing to make her triumphant entrance for the day upon the domestic boards, happened to glance out of her bedroom window and saw the couple coming up the driveway. And she also saw and recognized the small object in Miss Thayer's hand.

"Vally Thayer! You snake!" The words came sibilantly through her clenched teeth. "Oh, I deserve it right enough," she continued grimly. "The breakfast-in-your-room habit is insidious—sooner or later one is sure to be left at the post. If only—if only—gods! What a silly fool I was! To put the weapon into the girl's very hands—my own weapon!"

She took from the drawer of her dress-

ing-table a small box bound in morocco leather; she laid it on the hearthstone and smashed at it vindictively with the poker. Twice she missed, but the third blow caught it fairly; from the *dissecta membra* that presently strewed the floor it became apparent that the object had been a folding pocket camera of celebrated design. Then Mrs. Chase sailed down to luncheon as balmy and frilly as ever, to use Bob Alsop's admiring adjectives. A remarkable woman, and she contrived to make Miss Thayer's ears burn when they exchanged morning greetings in the hall below.

"Such enterprise! I never could have believed it of you, Vally dear. And you actually posed—if that is the correct photographic term—for a neophyte to Mr. Hamilton. How clever!"

"But I don't care," said Miss Thayer, defiantly confronting her flushed image in the glass. She had escaped to her own room to make herself presentable for luncheon. "It was a perfectly fair thing to do, for he's the nicest man here, and I was determined to find it out. Lisa Chase is a cat."

After luncheon there was a riding party on for the Gap, and Graeme Hamilton rather astonished his hostess by asking for a mount. "Oh, the photography can wait," he said carelessly. "You can't do much on these gray days."

So he rode, and most of the way at Vally Thayer's bridle-rein. Mrs. Chase would have vowed vengeance, but there is no advantage in the useless expenditure of emotional force, and so far as she could see there was nothing to be done. Mr. Hamilton was the eligible of eligibles, and Vally Thayer was Vally Thayer—enough said. "But if only—if only——"

Now the rain that came on that night was the beginning of a full four days' deluge. It was hard on the house party; that awful gulf between luncheon and five-o'clock tea may become impossible even to bridge, and

there was no squash court at the Towers.

Toward the end of the fourth afternoon Miss Thayer felt herself growing desperate of mind. "If Lisa Chase says another word to me I shall walk over and bite her," she murmured under her breath.

Apparently Graeme Hamilton must have seen his opportunity in her face, for he boldly proposed a tramp down to the village. "Raincoats and rubber boots," he suggested. "Oh, what if we do get wet—who cares?"

"Not I," assented Miss Thayer gleefully, and ran off for her things.

Mrs. Chase watched them disappear in the misty distance; there was a suggestive hint of friendly intimacy in the way the two figures leaned toward each other; an echo of the girl's clear laugh floated back. "H'm!" said Mrs. Chase, still rigidly suppressive of all futile feeling. Then her eye happened to fall upon a square box lying in a corner of the bench at the door side. It was Vally Thayer's camera just as she had left it three days ago. Mrs. Chase pounced upon it and retired to the seclusion of her own apartments.

Miss Thayer and Mr. Hamilton walked cheerfully onward through the storm. It was splendidly exhilarating, the rain driving straight in their faces and the wind roughing up their hair with his careless hand.

"Come on," called the girl over her shoulder, and raced along the woodland road, flopping recklessly through the shallow pools. "It's almost as good as going in wading again," she declared breathlessly as Hamilton caught up with her.

"Your skirt is soaking wet," he said rebukingly.

"I don't care; please don't make me want to care," she pleaded. "It's just for this little while; then back again to dress parade and cross-purposes."

"As you like it. I will come play with you myself." He seized a branch

of the laurel bush under which they were passing and shook it vigorously; a very creditable substitute for a shower bath followed.

"Oh," she gasped and retaliated in kind.

"It was like the bathroom fights that we children used to have," said Miss Thayer reminiscently as they started forward again. "They always began with someone throwing a wet sponge; there's an irresistible *diablerie* in the way it squashes against the wall. After that—the deluge. What fun!"

"But no jam for supper. Don't forget the consequences."

"Oh, I'm ready enough to pay the piper," she retorted. "I always make my amusements worth what they cost me."

"Always! You are fortunate, my lady."

"Look over there. It is actually clearing off. Say that it is."

"It is clearing off," he repeated obediently.

"Tomorrow I can go in for my photography again. You, m'sieu', will doubtless be in ecstasies."

"First lessons in the photographic course will be resumed at precisely—Look out! Don't trust that guard-rail——"

They were crossing the branch—Anglice, creek—on a footbridge consisting of a single cypress log, squared on the top side and guarded by a flimsily constructed hand-rail. The stream, swollen by the four days' incessant rain, was in flood. Miss Thayer led the way and had stopped to gaze at the torrent; unthinkingly she leaned her full weight against the rail.

They were in the water at almost the same instant, and Hamilton managed to grab the girl as he jumped. Fortunately the water was not much above his waist; in that current and encumbered with his heavy clothing and boots he could not have swum a stroke. Even as it was he found great difficulty in maintaining his equilibrium; at any moment he might lose his footing, and then inevitably they must be swept away, carried down

into some deep pocket and there drowned. He glanced upstream; a dozen big logs, flotsam from some overflowed sawmill yard, were beating down upon them. "Let go!" he shouted, and literally threw himself backward into the stream; the eddy floated them within arm's length of the bank. With his free hand Hamilton caught a projecting root that held.

The whole affair had not lasted above a minute; it was even difficult to realize that they had been in any danger.

Miss Thayer laughed hysterically. "At the end of the water fight," she gasped, "someone always got pushed into the bathtub with all her clothes on; generally me. Then nurse appeared and there was a drum-head court-martial. With bed for the sentence," she concluded more soberly.

Hamilton had seized both her hands in his. "Vally!" he said determinedly. "Vally!"

She broke away from him. "Don't!" she said.

"But why?"

"Because."

To this argument there could be obviously no rejoinder, and they hurried onward in silence.

At Hamilton's briefly expressed suggestion they attempted to effect an unobserved entrance by a side door and so up by the small stairway leading to the billiard-room. But quite unexpectedly Mrs. Chase appeared to the culprits on the upper landing. "Well, you two!" she exclaimed, and surveyed them dispassionately. "What a lot of cold water someone has been throwing! Vally might be a model for Arethusa dissolving into her fountain."

"We are ruining the rug," broke in Hamilton, and forthwith the twain sped in opposite directions down the corridor. Mrs. Chase reflected earnestly upon the significance of that vivid blush mounting to the very roots of the girl's fair hair. "Washable colors," she murmured discontentedly. "And youth is always saved."

Miss Thayer stood and dripped upon the tiled floor of her bathroom, await-

ing the arrival of her maid. "I couldn't, I couldn't," she said aloud. "Not until I had the chance to confess about that horrid camera. But how on earth to do it?"

No solution of the problem presented itself at dinner, and throughout the evening not a single word was exchanged between Miss Valentine Thayer and Mr. Graeme Hamilton. Mrs. Chase watched the progress of the comedy with keen interest, and at times with rising hopes.

A beautiful morning and a superb day for photographic work. Miss Thayer's uncomfortable imaginings vanished like April snow under the sunshine. "The explanation can take care of itself," she thought confidently. "I'll let it come naturally, just as it will. No, Marion, you needn't bother about bringing me up a tray this morning; I shall go to the breakfast-room."

It appeared that Mr. Hamilton had breakfasted very early that morning, but he was not in evidence about the house, and Miss Thayer felt unaccountably disappointed. Surely he could not have misunderstood her so utterly, and there was the lesson in photography. Finally she went in search of her camera, found it on the hall seat and started out on her own account.

The boathouse, with its thatched roof, was a picturesque object, and Miss Thayer determined to take it. She was pleased to find that she remembered so perfectly all the details of the process, and upon its completion she took her tablets and set down two entries: No. 1, view of the lake; No. 2, boathouse. "That shows exactly what and how many I've done," she reflected, well pleased with her own ingenuity. "No fear now of getting the labels of my sunsets and haystacks mixed up after the fashion of the ordinary amateur."

Miss Thayer found herself within sight of the house once more, and, according to her record, she had still to take views Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12. "I

might as well use this film up," she decided, "and then send it in to Henderson's to be developed. So everything goes."

Two of the greyhounds came leaping down the sloping lawn to meet her, and she promptly snapped them. Uncle Cobus, riding up from the quarters with a basket of eggs, obligingly posed his venerable mule before the camera, and received the gracious promise of a print so soon as the film should be developed. For No. 11 the sundial was a manifestly interesting subject, and down it went on the ivory tablets.

A shout from the terrace attracted Miss Thayer's attention, and she looked up. All the members of the house party were there; hastily they began grouping themselves in appropriate attitudes upon the steps.

"This is the opportunity of your photographic life," said Bobby Alsop solemnly. "We wish to be taken in a group; such an ensemble of youth, intelligence and beauty, in all probability, will never again be presented to the camera's critical eye."

Miss Thayer assented smilingly. Hamilton stood at the bottom of the steps smoking a cigarette and looking as inscrutable as ever. Well, she could show him what she could do; her nerves seemed surprisingly steady.

"All over," she announced as the shutter snapped and Hamilton stepped forward to meet her. "That finishes the film," she said cheerfully. "I've taken eleven shots and managed beautifully."

"I watched you make the last four exposures," he said.

"Well, I didn't make any mistakes," she retorted defiantly.

"No; only——"

"Only what?"

"You've forgotten every time to turn in a new section of film."

Miss Thayer colored. "I put them all down on my tablets," she said, conscious that the defense was a pitifully weak one.

Hamilton took the camera into his own hands. "It's a mistake all beginners are likely to make," he an-

swered gravely. "But hullo! There's no number visible at all. Could you possibly have wound it off? With your permission—it's a safety film, you know, and can be removed in the light." He sat down on the steps and unlocked the case. "Why, there's no film here! And oh, I say!" He tried to replace the cover, but it was too late, and three objects fell out—a powder-puff, a small mirror and a book bound in yellow paper, the "Théâtre Complet de Eugène Labiche, Vol. VII."

Mrs. Chase picked up the book. "Why, it's my copy of Labiche!" she exclaimed ingenuously. "Where did you get it, Vally?"

This was a master stroke; the solitary gun that Miss Thayer might have fired in reprisal was effectually spiked.

Nobody laughed; the electricity in the air was perceptible even to Bobby Alsop. "There comes the post," said the hostess, frank relief in her voice; and a general exodus followed. Hamilton did not move, and Miss Thayer obeyed his look.

"I have a confession to make," he began stolidly. "There was a time, several years ago, when I did go in rather extensively for photography. But I grew tired of it; since then—well, it has served as a convenient cover on more than one occasion. When one has the misfortune of being easily bored self-preservation becomes the highest law. After a week with a house party there comes a time when, if Reason is not to topple from her throne, one must get into the hinterland and just yell. For such an emergency my good old camera is the best possible ticket-of-leave. When I met you at the lake Tuesday the fit was on me, and if you had been privileged to examine the contents of my photographic apparatus you could have found them to consist of a flask and a couple of sandwiches. That makes us quits, doesn't it? Only I'm sorry—sorry——"

"That everyone should have seen what a pitiful-looking object my stalking horse really was," finished the girl. Her face was pale, but her

eyes were hard and bright; they gazed at him steadily.

Hamilton made a gesture of dissent. "Oh, bother!" he said impatiently.

Mrs. Chase appeared on the terrace above them. "Luncheon is ready, you people," she announced, and they followed her in obediently. That afternoon Hamilton went north by the limited.

"I needn't have let him think me quite so despicable a creature," reflected Miss Thayer a little dreamily. "That powder-puff!"

The same evening she went to Mrs. Chase's room. "I've come to return your Labiche," said Miss Thayer briefly. "It was rather catty of you, Lisa."

"Miow!" retorted Mrs. Chase, with exquisite insolence. Yet when the girl had gone the elder woman sighed; she had been as fond of Vally Thayer as she could be of anyone, and it had been an absolutely barren victory—ashes in the mouth.

Mrs. Chase left the next morning by the early train, thereby dispensing with the formality of all-around farewells. But later in the day Miss Thayer received through the housekeeper a small package that Mrs. Chase had left for her. It contained no word of message, merely a cartridge of photographic films. Vally looked at it puzzled, and tossed it into a drawer; she had given up the pursuit of the photographic art.

A day later an idea occurred to her and she took the roll down to Henderson's. "I think there may be one picture on it," she explained. "If you will be kind enough to develop that and never mind about the rest of the film."

It turned out to be a really excellent picture of the vista through the pines and down to the lake, and the presentment of Mr. Graeme Hamilton was unmistakable. Miss Thayer considered at some length; then she inclosed the print in a plain envelope

and addressed it to Mr. Hamilton himself. After it was gone she regretted her action and tried, unavailingly, to reclaim the package.

"As though it could or did make any difference to me," said Hamilton. He had posted suddenly back to the Towers; bit by bit the whole story had come out, and they had naturally agreed upon a happy ending for it. "A stalking horse is a stalking horse, isn't it?"

"Not quite," retorted Miss Thayer, with spirit. "Of course a woman can't make the running in the open, man-fashion, but just the same her still-hunt has its ethics. How am I going to make you understand it?—the distinction, I mean. If there had never been any film in that camera from the very beginning—as a certain person tried to make you think—I could never have looked you in the face again."

"Generally the man is only too happy to be caught to bother about the details," observed Hamilton.

"But it's only the woman who plays fair who can hold what she captures. And that's all that really counts."

"Just one other thing, Vally. When I pulled you out of the water and our eyes met and I spoke your name, I told you all and more than I did ten minutes ago. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Then, ethics apart, what was behind that dreadful 'don't'?"

"Because."

"That's what you said at the time, and naturally I despaired. Now I want to know."

"There was once a man," said Miss Thayer, "who went out to hunt the bear. He had a perfectly splendid time of it until the bear turned around and began to hunt him."

"I accept the explanation," said Hamilton.

And since he was only a man, after all, he was not ill pleased with it.



ROBERT TWIGG, KNIGHT-ERRANT

By Kate Jordan

ROBERT TWIGG was a profoundly constant man. He did not realize it. This attribute was like the marrow of his spine, vital and unconsidered. It was constancy cemented into habit which made him an inmate of Mrs. Whimple's boarding-house for eighteen years, without his changing his seat at the table or his first-floor back room. During that time he had never varied his breakfast except in the matter of fruit, which changed with the season. Robert never changed. The same vice of habit had kept him with the firm of Burritt & Patterson, a big department shop on Broadway, for twelve years. There he had sat through the many duplicated days, making out memoranda on small slips of paper and answering the inquiries of a line of orris-scented, petted, garrulous and sometimes rude shoppers.

But when his first reserve was split like a shell a few people had been privileged to make discoveries about Robert Twigg. They found he was neither an uninspired clod nor a fool with a profound manner. An English actor, who during a season had come for his tea and marmalade breakfasts to Mrs. Whimple's, once described him to a chum at the theatre as they both stood under the gaslight rubbing in the grease paint:

"That American clerk I told you of is really extraordinary. He looks like a bounder, has reddish hair in a thin scallop on his forehead, and small, heavy eyes, and his life is as dull as the life of a grocer's horse; but the fellow has really an unusual imagination. He's bubbling with romance.

He knows the poets by heart. He knows all that's going on in the world of art. He sees only the best plays, from gallery seats. You should hear him on Shakespeare. My eye! he made me sit up. And what a sense of beauty—a sunset at the end of a street, a flower, a picture—well—you should have heard what he's said of them. Why, the fellow lives in his dreams. He's a Claude Melnotte inside of him, he is, indeed."

But Robert had this beauty and art and intelligence superficially, like so much floating driftwood, not deep enough in his character to form an oar to push him to accomplishment. Then he was in the grip of habit. Most important of all he was handicapped by a commonplace personality, for to look like a barber and be the fraction of an inch under five feet can be a tragedy in the life of a man. No woman had loved Robert Twigg.

One day the world changed for him. A new girl came to work at Burritt & Patterson's, and was placed behind the veiling counter. Chance or fate, or whatever it is that looks after the settings of the human drama, had noted that the veiling counter was close to the plate-glass window behind which Robert wrote on a small pad of paper all day long in fine Spencerian script. He was made aware of her arrival by a whisper in his ear from Reynolds, who looked after the exchanges and who was something of a wag.

"Seen the new girl in the veilings? A peach! Makes the whole bunch of stage beauties look like a lot of two-spots. A corker! There she is. Gee whiz—I'm for her!"

Robert obeyed Reynolds's excited nudge and looked up. All he said was:

"Very pretty. You seldom see a blonde as fair as that."

"And a real blonde," Reynolds continued, with an air of personal triumph; "none of your peroxide daisies there. I'm a regular Sherlock Holmes about paints and dyes and all that muck. They can't escape my eagle eye—the drug stores can't turn out *that* shade. Bet you fifty cents I know all she's telling about herself by tonight." He paused to do a few clog-dance steps. "Take me?"

"No," said Robert, and went on writing. But his heart was lighter. During the day he gave quick, furtive glances at the new girl.

"She's like moonlight," he thought. "Her hair's like the silvery floss around corn. . . . What color are her eyes? It doesn't matter—they are deep and mysterious. . . . How white her skin is! . . . Her mouth is like a little flower uncurling and just the color of coral. . . . How beautiful her throat is! . . . She's right to wear such a low little collar—her throat is so slender and round, as soft and white as the breast of a bird. . . . There's crape on her dress—that's why her smile comes so seldom and is a little sad. . . . What a refined, attentive air she has as she listens to the customers. . . . How they stare at her and speak to one another aside. They are talking about her beauty. She seems so unconscious of it. She's like a young princess. . . . Her name ought to be Dolores or Juliet or Perdita. . . . How beautiful the line of her chin is. . . . There never was such a perfect little nose. . . . She's like a flower in the twilight."

His thoughts ran this way through the day. The first vague glamour of romance tempered the business crudities and kept them from absorbing him in the customary way. It was after six and they were clearing their desks when Reynolds spoke of her again.

"Well, I've got things pat—I said I would. I'm a wonder. Listen:

Name, Mary Clement (I'll call her Mamie). Age, twenty-two. Unmarried. Nationality, English. Arrived three weeks ago on the *Britannic*. Orphan. Lives with married sister in Pelham. There you are—sounds like something for the Rogues' Gallery, but it's straight. Miss Donaghue told me. The girls are wild about her. They'll just make a queen of her, though she does make them all look like remnants."

Robert had only one regret. Mary was not a romantic name. As he walked home just as he had walked for twelve years, he did not see the gray streets, and only habit made him pause at Mrs. Whimple's. He had been wishing all the way that the new girl's name had been Annabel, like Annabel Lee, or Byron's Haidee, or the English Maud of Tennyson—"queen lily and rose in one." But when he looked at the back of his Webster's Dictionary that night and found that Mary meant "star of the sea" he was comforted. He realized that the name had been used so universally because it was beautiful. He said it over several times, giving the two syllables softly and slowly. It became like a new name to him, and it meant "star of the sea."

"She is like a white, clear star, and she has come over the sea from a far land," he said.

This made him think of England as he filled his pipe and sat by the open window looking out on clothes-lines, sheds, the windows of the boarding-houses in the next street; partially conscious, too, that an accordion, a flute and three different coon songs were making havoc of what might have been a peaceful twilight peeping between the roofs. He felt an understanding and delight in England because he knew Dickens and Thackeray so well and because of certain lectures with stereopticon views which he had attended. He had dreamed of going there one day and driving in a hansom through a fog, of really seeing the lions on Trafalgar Square, the jewels in the Tower, the Golden Cross Hotel, still standing, where David Copperfield had

met Steerforth. But he knew now he never would. It was very pleasant to think that Mary had seen all these things and many more. Perhaps some day she would tell him about England, about London most of all.

But the thought made him nervous. He was so shy with all women—except Mrs. Whimple—it was like a disease. The keenest suffering he knew was having to speak to a woman except on business. The social life of the boarding-house was a sealed book to him. He went up and down the stairs furtively, entering the dining-room with every nerve taut as he gave a vague, circular nod to certain azure, pink or white splashes that meant women, and afterward hurried away, darting into his own room like a culprit if he heard the rustle of skirts. So to be bold enough to think of speaking to Mary startled him. The feeling died away, leaving him humble. He would never speak to her, never. He felt sure of that. If other women seemed appalling just because they were women, what of this divinity, the first really beautiful human creature he had ever seen? He felt sure he would never speak to her. But it would be a pleasure to watch her all day long and think of her at night.

During two months this happiness was his. He did not once meet her eyes. He avoided such a possibility. If she had looked directly at him at other times he could have meant to her only a busy, narrow-shouldered clerk, with hair scant on top, the indoor pallor, set lips and constantly lowered eyes. Nature had given Robert a pastel-colored personality; he himself finished the work by further self-effacement, appearing, except to a sacred few—of whom Mrs. Whimple was chief—as a human machine, working and pausing at stated hours.

Reynolds's audacity tore the skin from his shyness at times, Reynolds attacking and he defending his sensitive reserve. This had often annoyed him, but since Mary's arrival Reynolds's slang and conceit had become very sweet, because he talked con-

stantly of her. Robert had the secret happiness of listening to an account of his attempts at an acquaintance with her, of hearing how difficult it was to "get on" with her, until at last she was stigmatized as "stuck up."

"Miss Donaghue introduced us. She told me she praised me to the skies and told Miss Clement I was IT. After a week of this I thought I might ask to call. *Nit!* She was seeing no one. Then I asked her to go to the theatre—Grand Opera House—dollar seats—big show—'Ben Hur'—chariot race. She *wouldn't*. Then I tried sending her a box of Huyler's. She gave it away to the girls and asked me never to send her anything again—she preferred not. *Yah!*" And Reynolds curled his mustache for comfort. "She's too much of a looker for me—stuck on herself. She should have stayed in England and hooked a prince. I guess she's out for a tiara. No more in mine, thanks."

So ended Reynolds's suit, and behind the wooden face with which Robert listened he rejoiced. Of course she was cold. Of course she despised the face-tious, confident pursuit of Reynolds.

"'Star of the sea!'" Robert thought. "How could any man think himself fit to win her?"

He knew his sex sufficiently well, however, to feel sure that many men would seek her love without realizing any shortcomings in themselves. Indeed, it was astonishing to watch the masculine interest in dotted veils since she arrived at Burritt & Patterson's. The story of her beauty had spread from one to another, and men came in with sisters and cousins to see her; young college fellows came in twos and threes; Robert also saw older men, who caught sight of her while casually passing, pause and pass again and again. And with all this, Mary's seeming unconsciousness of this power in herself, the grace and dignity of her manner as she attended faithfully to her work, made these admirers as respectful as if they were gazing at her in a drawing-room.

But of course, Robert told himself, one day the end would come. Some

man, some unusual man, young, comely, powerful, rich—perhaps a leader in some cause, a writer or painter or a man holding big financial issues like threads between his fingers—would love and marry Mary. Only the nearest type to the Knights of the Round Table that this ugly modern life could furnish would be tolerable to Robert. He could accept him sadly, but with interest, and he was poised to meet this break at some distant day, perhaps years hence.

What happened was different. One Monday Mary was not in her place. Robert saw Reynolds out at the veiling counter talking to Miss Donaghue and several excited girls. A cold feeling of awe and dismal expectancy swept over him. He was prepared, from the evident excitement and many gestures, to hear that some tragic thing had happened to Mary—that she was ill or dead.

"Well, what do you think?" Reynolds asked, his tone big with information when he came into the office. "Mary Clement's gone. That Madame Chalbery, the French painter's wife, is just crazy about her. She's talked to her about posing for her husband, but at first Miss C. wouldn't—too high and mighty. The other night the painter's wife got her to go to the studio, and there Miss C. met the painter, and he told her he had been looking for her for years for his greatest work—a lot of frescoes or something like that about Elaine, whoever the lady was."

"Elaine!" Robert thought. He felt the artist's joy in his mollusk-like soul, as a fancy of Mary rose before him bending over Lancelot's shield or on her death-barge with lily hands folded.

"So she's gone," Reynolds continued. "She's to be paid three times as much as she got here. Next year all the stuff is to be put up in the Paris Salon."

Robert sat mute. He was saying good-bye to such knowledge of Mary as he had known. He might never see her again. He did not know whether

news of artists' models, even wonderful ones, ever got into the public prints; perhaps not; so he might never hear of her.

Robert was leaden-hearted that night. This soul, mind, eye worship had meant more to him these two months than even he had realized. There was nothing to look forward to now on awaking in the morning. Mary had gone and with her had vanished the phantom of herself that had joyously companioned him in his silence and obscurity. But a nature shrinking from ordinary contact with real people and finding a sufficient world between the covers of books, the stage from a gallery seat, the study of beautiful things, dreams, and such an ideal as this of a stranger whose voice he had heard only speaking to others, was bound to reconstruct something from its loss and live on that.

So Robert fashioned for himself a hope, and daily it grew more beautiful, more convincing. She *might* come in to see Miss Donaghue; he *might* meet her on the street; he would go to Pelham, where she lived with her sister, on one of his Sunday jaunts, and he *might* see her then.

All of these things during several months following came true. One day when he looked up he saw Miss Donaghue's stout, fresh face beaming as she shook both the hands of a girl in a soft, pale gray gown. A big hat held her eyes in shadow; she wore violets in her belt; there was color in her cheeks now—that faintest pink that lies in the crisped heart of a white rose. It was a transfigured Mary. Another day at his lunch hour, as he crossed Broadway to a dairy kitchen where he ate oatmeal and baked apples, he saw her in a hansom; he recognized the elderly woman with her as the painter's wife whose inquiries he had often attended to in the shop. Mary was laughing as he stood on the curb to let the hansom go by. Something white and fluffy blew away from her throat, leaving it bare.

He made three Sunday excursions to Pelham without success. But on

a very warm August morning he met her. She was strolling languidly up and down in the shade of some trees outside a small house of the villa type set back from the pavement; she was in a sheer white gown and without a hat; a little boy of three in a sailor-suit clung to her fingers.

"Daddy's coming on the next train, Peter," she was saying to the child as he passed. "Yes, you and mama and I are all going to meet him."

"Her sister's child," Robert thought as he went on, excited from the encounter. When he reached the corner of the street he paused. He wondered if he dare venture back. He grew courageous as he remembered Mary had not looked at him. He turned and met her again. This time she did look at him as at any stranger, but the look seemed a plummet laying his secret bare to her. He went on, red of face, and told himself in the train that this was the most important day of all. Their eyes had met and he knew their color now—a greenish gray, flecked like an agate.

It was January of the year following before he heard of her again, and this time it was in the society column of a daily paper. In Paris she had married a well-known American. To Robert the man was only a name, a powerful one whose syllables spelled wealth and social position. He thought of these first. Then, as he considered, he knew from all he had read of the name that it also spelled avarice, oppression, self-laudation, cruelty and sixty-five years. Doubt gave place to disappointment in Robert's heart, and these were followed by a sorrowful apprehension which settled upon him. Mary could not have loved this elderly, widowed man of granite, with children older than herself. He was sure of that. This was not the man he would have chosen for her, this was not the lion-hearted leader, with youth and love in his eyes, he had pictured as her fitting mate. He was hurt deeply. Mary had sold herself. There could be no doubt of it. She had been purchased in the market like any slave.

But he did not blame her. He blamed the false standards of society, the money-tainted advice of older women, the magnetism of the strong over the weak, perhaps a distaste for poverty, perhaps an empty heart. He recalled the wistful pathos that at times could flood Mary's eyes. If he should chance upon her in the future he felt sure he would see that look made enduring.

The day following he bought a scrap-book and pasted in it the account of her marriage. As Mrs. Nicholas Dunbar, he knew the papers would exploit her, and a new acquaintanceship through printer's ink would in this way be established between them. The scrap-book thickened with fluttering slips and newspaper cuts of her photograph during the winter. Besides, to Robert's surprise, she came frequently to Burritt & Patterson's, and always stopped to talk to Miss Donaghue. She wore beautiful clothes of delicate fabrics and colors, which told that her carriage waited for her. Once she paused at his window and spoke of a mistake in her bill. Once her husband was with her. Each time Robert saw, deeper in her eyes, the look he dreaded. Her air was weary; luxury seemed weighing her down. The day he saw her with her husband she was very pale and walked beside him with the air of a chidden child. Robert suffered with her. She was not happy. He believed she was eaten up with regret, "perked up in a glistening grief," wearing "a golden sorrow."

More than a year went by in this way, Robert reading of her social success, and seeing deeper heart-break in her face each time. The love that he gave Mary had something divine in it and gave him a wonderful intuition about her. When she began to come in, wearing a close veil and plainly dressed, to speak hurriedly to big, bluff, gray-haired Miss Donaghue, who sincerely loved her, when she withdrew her account from the shop, Robert knew that she had been forbidden to enter the place

where she had once served. He could understand her husband wishing to have this uninteresting chapter of her life quite closed. But he knew, too, she never would have clung intimately to Miss Donaghue's friendship had she been a happy woman in her new splendor. Thinking of her he read "The Lord of Burleigh" those days, and one verse clung to his memory like a burr:

But a trouble weighed upon her
And perplexed her night and morn
With the burden of an honor
Unto which she was not born.

He wished he might help her. The longing tormented him. For the first time in his life his thoughts intruded between him and his work. He had never before felt an active rebellion against his unimportance. Now it irritated him to realize that, though he might burn with the chivalry of a knight-errant of the eleventh century in his lady's cause, he could do nothing. It was as vain a dream as to imagine a clothes-pin sustaining a planet.

Mrs. Whimple was holding up his newspaper as he went into the dining-room one morning. She was to a slight extent in his confidence about Mary.

"Here's news!" she cried, laying her finger on a prominent headline, and Robert read:

MRS. DUNBAR MISSING SINCE
TUESDAY

"It'll take your breath away!" cried Mrs. Whimple.

But he was scarcely surprised. He had divined so much of Mary's distress from her face that he had felt that Tragedy skulked near her. He sat down, dull and cold, and read the story.

Mary had been missing a week, during which a quiet, thorough but unsuccessful search had been made for her. It had become impossible to keep such a news morsel out of the papers, and reporters now supplied statements, surmises and coloring to make it read like the beginning of a roman-

tic novel. As the story went, on the Tuesday night previous Mr. Dunbar had stepped from his opera-box to speak to some friend in another part of the house. When he returned his wife was not there. He had not seen her since nor received any message from her, nor any clue to lighten the puzzle. Theories of an unbalanced mind and possible suicide had been abandoned quickly, for further search at her home had proven that the flight had been carefully planned. A trunkful of clothes had been secretly sent away several days before; she had cashed a cheque that morning for a few thousand dollars. She had given no hint of her determination; no love story could be built as an explanation except on a baseless foundation. In an opera gown and cloak she had vanished into a fog where speculation was routed.

"She was a long time making up her mind to this, I guess," Miss Donaghue said to Reynolds a few days later as she lingered by the plate-glass window. "When she went she went for good."

Robert sat silently writing.

"You never spoke to Mary Clement when she was here, did you, Mr. Twigg?" asked Miss Donaghue.

"No," said Robert.

"The sweetest girl! A child at heart. She needed love, and a girl doesn't get that when she marries a sour-hearted tyrant like that Dunbar. One look at him settled him with me."

"What did she marry him for?" demanded Reynolds. "For gold—not for love," he declaimed. "Women are all alike."

"Her head was turned, I suppose. She was alone—an orphan—and so young. She wasn't in love with anyone else, either, Mr. Reynolds." And Miss Donaghue flashed her eyes scathingly at him in Mary's defense. "Dear, lovely, sweet girl—oh, I wish she'd send me a line. I'd do anything in the world for her."

"Tell me if she does," cried Reynolds in excitement.

"I'd be likely to—a gas-bag like you! No, if I needed to tell any man I guess I'd tell Mr. Twigg. He could keep a secret." She turned to him. "Couldn't you?"

The look that widened Robert's eyes was almost rapacious.

"Try me," he said in a low voice. She moved away a step. "You won't forget?" he found courage to say.

"Of course I won't," said Miss Donaghue cheerfully.

When the warm, long days of June came the clerks began to go away on their annual holidays of two weeks. Miss Donaghue left the middle of the month. It happened that Robert was scheduled to go a week later. Up to this time Mary's fate was still a mystery. The search, which continued, was mentioned at intervals, and interviews with Nicholas Dunbar were occasionally given, his wounded egotism taking shelter under a charge against his wife's sanity as the only explanation of an act he called incomprehensible.

"If he finds her he'll lock her up, sure's fate. She'll have a pleasant time with papa—I guess nit," said Reynolds, after reading a paragraph in an evening paper.

Robert made preparations for leaving the city to spend his annual two weeks on a farm in Dutchess County. In one way he hated leaving New York. He seemed going away from Mary. He reasoned, however, that this was a wild fancy. She might, of course, be in New York, hidden in the crowd; but it was just as likely she was hundreds of miles away. He would have a newspaper sent to him daily and would be quite as well informed regarding her as if he remained in the city.

The night before his proposed departure a telegram changed his plans. Only twice before in his trim, undeviating life had he been startled by the yellow envelope signifying haste, the unexpected, the significant; and to see it lying on his bureau when he entered his room was a sufficient sur-

prise, but the written words were astounding.

Come tomorrow morning. Most important. Need your help. Answer, Milford, Connecticut.

LIZZIE DONAGHUE.

It was a call to Mary! He felt it. With every step he took to the telegraph office he became more sure of this. The amazing, the unforeseen, the incredible had happened: *He was to help Mary!*

After sending word of his coming the next day, and on what train, he returned in a maze. All night, as he tossed in excited wakefulness, and on the train, he made a new acquaintance with himself. The enormity of this surprise had to some extent undone the deadening work of torpid years. Fate had selected him to be of vital service to the woman he loved. He must perform that service suitably, successfully, at whatever cost to himself. The ambition to be worthy of this opportunity, to perform what was expected of him became fanatical.

He found Miss Donaghue waiting for him at the station.

"Come," she said mysteriously, and they crossed the road to a buggy and horse, she constantly looking back, her chubby face pale. "Now, I'll explain that telegram," she said as she took up the reins.

"I think I know," said Robert, surprised at his own impulsiveness in interrupting her.

"You do? What?"

"Mrs. Dunbar is here."

"Hush—the very trees!" she whispered. "I'm afraid of them. Yes, you've guessed right. She's hiding at my mother's—came eight days ago." She gripped Robert's arm. "You've got to get Mary away to England. It takes a man to do it, and I thought of you because you're so quiet, so sure. 'Still waters run deep.' That's why I wired you instead of my brothers—when they take a glass too much they talk. Now, are you up to it?"

"Try me, Miss Donaghue. Anything—anything!" he said, and felt his lips trembling.

"You're a good sort. When we get sitting down comfortably I'll tell you the whole business."

She pulled the horse up at the gate in front of a neat white cottage in the middle of an old-fashioned garden. Robert found himself shaking hands with Miss Donaghue's mother, sister, niece, nephew—he hardly knew how many, he was so dazzled. He was for the first time a point of attraction, stared at, talked to. But the vitality of the moment conquered his self-consciousness.

The next morning he stood face to face with Mary. Her hand lay in his. She smiled at him. Though quiet, Robert had repose and a new, alert attention, and Miss Donaghue, with her cheerful, vigorous magnetism and laughter, swept them irresistibly into the full tide of acquaintanceship. Robert felt as if the chrysalis of his individuality had become a butterfly.

Mary was thinner and very white. Suffering and fear had picked hollows in her face. The contour of chin and throat had sharpened.

"But her beauty will come back when she is happy again," Robert thought as he watched her in the shady room, lying back in a big cane chair by the window, moth-like shadows from the garden passing over her. "And I am to pilot her to happiness—I."

Miss Donaghue's plan was this: Mary, disguised as much as possible, with black hair and a heavy mourning veil, was to go to New York with Robert the following day and sail on the *Lucania*. He was to play the part of her brother, with all the deep mourning additions to his one black suit supplied by Miss Donaghue. He was to have permission from an alderman who was a relative of the Donaghue family to remain on board after the sailing and return on the pilot boat. He was to keep his eyes open for detectives and to circumvent, if possible, any detention of Mary in case she was tracked. He was to be the last passenger to enter the pilot boat after saying goodbye to her in the role of brother.

"And now, Mr. Twigg, have you any suggestions to make to help along the masquerade?" asked Miss Donaghue.

The many detective romances Robert had devoured helped him now.

"I would suggest that Mrs. Dunbar walk with a cane, as if she were a little lame, and hold my arm as if for support. In this way also we won't become separated for a second."

"Good!" Miss Donaghue cried. "Don't you think so, Mary?"

"It's getting picturesque," said Mary, with a flicker of her lashes as she smiled. "Please think of more things, Mr. Twigg."

"Then," said Robert, his hands clammy from excitement at his triumph, "let us speak with a foreign accent—or, better still, in a foreign language. I can speak some French."

"I speak French quite well," said Mary. "We lived in Guernsey a long time. There are a good many French people there."

They completed their arrangements even as to names. Should anyone be listening suspiciously she was to be Suzanne and he Pierre.

Mary flung off her lassitude and laughed as they practiced their parts, the Donaghue family sitting about as audience. The limp, the French, Robert's protecting, brotherly air, the change the dark hair made in Mary under the sheltering crape, were all pronounced perfect.

"There won't be a hitch—take my word for it," said Miss Donaghue.

That night Mary talked to Robert of her future. Her uncle, a vicar in Devonshire, was waiting for her to come to him. His wife, who had formerly opposed all his relatives, was now dead and there was a home in the fair Devon country of which Robert had read in "*Lorna Doone*." She did not care what Nicholas Dunbar would do, once she had reached that vine-covered vicarage. She made no plans; she was content with the assurance of her own heart that, once there and her declaration of independence sent to her husband, he would realize his helplessness. Of her life

with him she said nothing to Robert, but Miss Donaghue did.

"The man's chronic jealousy and cruelty were like something that might happen in Turkey," said Miss Donaghue, her eyes snapping. "I can't tell you the story—it sounds crazy—but from love of her he tortured her, broke her spirit. She was like something trapped, put in a grand cage, very much admired, and then persecuted. The life was killing her. Oh, you are doing a beautiful thing in helping her get back to her own people!"

Robert went into the old-fashioned garden and stood under the stars, staring before him. Miss Donaghue did not guess *how* beautiful to him this mission was. "Good-bye" was the title of the epilogue after this one eventful circumstance of his life; but this fact, which would have made a more ambitious man unhappy, was to Robert a natural part of his common lot. He had expected nothing—not even to hear her ever say good-bye, and by reason of this what might have been a quatrain expressing renunciation was to him an epic of accomplishment. He was thankful.

The next day they sat together on the train. She talked guardedly to him in English, sheltered by the clatter of the cars. He would remember all the things she said—little things, pleasant things, anxious things—as long as he lived. He, Robert Twigg, sat there holding her hand at times, in the role of brother, when a terror of entering New York came upon her. He, Robert Twigg, who had loved her so long without conceiving for one presumptuous moment that their lives would ever touch at any point, had the ecstasy of feeling her lean upon his arm as they walked to a cab. It was wonderful. On board the ship, which they reached designedly only ten minutes before sailing, the terror of discovery made her almost faint; *his* hands drew her to shelter; *his* arm supported her.

"*Ma chère Suzanne, tu as l'air malade,*" he whispered in an accent learned from books.

"*Ah, mon frère, mon frère,*" she managed to sob for the benefit of a sharp-eyed man a few yards away, watching passengers, and whom they both feared, "*je suis triste. Je m'en vais. Adieu! adieu!*"

The sharp-eyed man went away. The ship sailed. There was to be no sensation visibly, nothing to tell bystanders that the most vital moment in the life of one pale little man was on the stroke.

"I'll never forget your kindness, Mr. Twigg," Mary whispered, with a polite manner as the pilot boat drew near.

"I'll never forget you," said Robert.

She had given him her hand. He gripped it until it hurt her. She thought this nervousness, but he was really fighting hard. The wish to tell her all she had meant to him was a storm under which he bent; to take his secret from his heart and show it to her in the light of day; to say to her the three words he had never spoken to any woman; to look into her eyes when she *knew*; to listen to her answer, however pitying or passing; to remember these things as long as he lived. He burned to speak, as, piteous-eyed, he stared at her. It would be such a wonderful moment for him. His life would have no greater.

But it did. As he remained still silent, too much the prisoner of habit to break his chain, however much he might jangle it and look at it, he felt Mary's hand on his arm.

"You must go. The pilot's coming. The other passengers are over. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" Robert said, with a stupid misery.

"Good-bye, brother." Mary smiled, lifted her veil and kissed him lightly.

She was startled by the strangled sound that came from his shut lips as he turned away and climbed down the ladder. He looked up at her, a worshiper. She smiled down at him, the veil lifted a little.

"I'll write to you when I reach England," she whispered.

She never did.

HAVE PITY, LOVE

HAVE pity, Love, for all the hearts that ache
 With loneliness incurred for thy sweet sake;
 For all the hearts which cherish still the hope
 That they may feel the touch for which they grope,
 Or from their dear belief may never wake.

Still more for all those bleeding hearts that break
 For hunger which thou canst no longer slake,
 Or loss, with which no hand but God's may cope,
 Have pity, Love!

But for the hearts which thou canst never make
 Thine own—the hearts which cannot give or take,
 Or know what yields to life its sweeter scope—
 To these thy tender arms in mercy ope;
 For all of these—God's seeming one mistake—
 Have pity, Love!

RICHARD B. GLAENZER.



LATITUDINAL

“THERE'S Colonel Topely, jagged again. I thought his doctor had restricted him to two fingers of whisky a day.”
 “He did; but since then Topely's been taking his whisky from a milk-pan.”



A DEFINITION

“PA, what is a conservative?”
 “A conservative, my son, is a person who will never fight unless he can pick out an opponent to suit him.”



BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

SAPSMITH—Yahs! I always say what I think.
 MISS BRISK—How do you keep up an extended conversation?